

# The Beat Within

THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE INSIDE • VOLUME 13.35

illustration by:

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**The system is screwed up!** The government is no better than us! They're a bunch of hypocrites that need to understand people are people. America needs to wake up and smell the coffee, cause there are people getting *ignored and abused*.

read the rest of A Pissed Off American's POW on page 9



**To all** our loyal Beat writers, readers, and artists. I'm dropping in to write a guest editor's note. I'm new to this page, but not to The Beat. Alameda County writers might know me. My name is Sheerly - I'm the tall, curly haired one who is always forgetting her coat. As for other counties, there's a chance that at some point I wrote a "From The Beat" comment to you...because even though we usually try to write responses for units where we have a face-to-face relationship with the writers, sometimes we're short staff and need to step in and help out a colleague. So we all write a lot of responses, which is why we may have already met in these pages, even if we never met in person.

Now, I've been doing workshops for about ten years (and counting) so this week, just for fun, I did some math. 50 weeks per year times 4 units on average per week times 15 pieces per unit times ten years. Holy smoke, that means I've edited 30,000 pieces! Written 30,000 "From The Beats"! And there are other facilitators and editors who have done even more than that: The number is even bigger for the true OG's, people like David Inocencio, and Michael Kroll, and a couple others who you might just be lucky enough to see each week in your units.

Still. 30,000 pieces. 30,000 poems, flows, stories, jokes, prayers, opinions, essays. That's a lot of words, and wow is it a lot of talent. Talent that should be out in the world, facing it, changing it.

But you know what else it's been? A lot of excuses too. One of the most tragic parts about this job is when we see such dazzling potential fall short of where it ought to be. And part of that has to do with how much our writers believe in themselves - or don't. What do I mean? Well, too many writers talk about the obstacles in their way as if the obstacles can't ever be overcome. It's fine to know what your roadblocks are, but only because that's how to conquer them, right?

So in honor of this 30,000 piece "anniversary" I decided to do something new. I picked the TOP FIVE REASONS FOR FAILURE that I've read in ten years at The Beat. Some of you may have written words along these lines yourself...

1. This is all I know
2. I'm in too deep, it's too late
3. There's no jobs
4. I never had a father figure.
5. The system is set up for me to fail

Why am I writing down these five reasons? Because in my heart of hearts, I don't believe they are reasons, I believe they are excuses. If you got no father figure, find a mentor. If the streets are all you know, then it's time to become a student of the world and start learning - get on a bus and go to the beach. Go to a museum. Read a book. You want to make money? Do it legal, it will save you money in the long run. And if you tell me it's too late, I'll tell you about people I know in your exact position who made all the changes they needed, but did it when they were already more than 30 years old.

And if you tell me the system is set up for you to fail, I'll say what you all love to say in your pieces: F the system! This is about you.

Basically, there are a million reasons to fail. And only one reason to succeed: Because you want it.

But how bad do you want it? How bad do you want to be the first person in your family to get a college degree? How bad do you want to own your own house, that you paid for legit? How bad do you want to raise your children in a place where the sound of gunshot is only gonna come to you from a television set? How bad do you want to leave this earth knowing that you added something to it, some beauty, some art, some joy?

Do you want them bad enough to drop the BS that deprived you of your freedom, your education, your time

with your loved ones?

Now, maybe some of you out there are going to say, "Wait, these aren't excuses, they're just reality." If someone out there has a response to this, then bring it. That's what The Beat is for, for you to voice your opinion.

Do I sound like I'm preaching right now? I hope so. I've got 30,000 pieces worth of feeling inside me, just begging to come out. You see, we facilitators spend so much time typing editing, responding to your pieces that your voices are like a constant low hum in our ears. A hum of potential, a hum of doubt, a hum of pain, a hum of promise. We hear your laughter, your tears, we feel your anger, we laugh with you when you crack us up. We struggle each week to put this publication together on a shoestring budget, and we do it because we believe that inside every single writer and artist who puts it down for The Beat - and I repeat that - every single one of you - there is a potential leader, a singer, a teacher, a true soldier in the fight for justice.

We believe that every time one of you goes to jail for a long sentence, America loses a little bit of her soul.

And we believe that each and every one of you is better than where you've been. No excuses.

Peace, as always.

Wow, thank you Sheerly for stepping up to the plate, You are heard loud and clear from us editorial note readers. Thank you again!

This week's topics addressed in workshops leading up the writing that is featured in this issue were... "Your Stop Sign" - Do you have a personal "Stop Sign" that keeps you from doing things that you might want to do, or that others are trying to get you to do? Does your mother give you a certain look that can stop you from doing something? Do you have your own principles and moral code that lets keeps you from doing certain things? Do your personal experiences or memories - like watching loved ones go to jail or fall to drugs or alcohol - act like a Stop Sign to keep you from following in their footsteps? Have you drawn lines in your own life that you won't cross, for whatever reasons? If so, what made you draw these lines, and what have they kept you from doing?

Second topic, "Public Execution" - Nowadays, all executions of prisoners are done in the middle of the night behind prison walls (like San Quentin). But there was a time, not that long ago, when executions were public events. Back in the day, when hanging was the preferred method, they would hang the prisoner in the town square in the middle of the day, and always with a huge crowd. It was like a circus, with people selling food and t-shirts, laughing and partying. (Sometimes, while they were hanging a pickpocket, other pickpockets worked the crowd.) Today, more than half the American public support the death penalty - but only if it's done outside the public's view. What do you think about that? Should executions be public events (if they're allowed at all)? Would you watch someone being executed? What effect do you think public executions would have on society? Would they have an impact on murder or other crimes? Would they have an effect on you?

Lastly, "Common Sense" - When you hear the words, "Common Sense," what comes to mind? What is a good example of "Common Sense"? What did your mother mean when she told you to "use your common sense!" Do you know people - even smart people - who don't seem to have much common sense? Can you give us an example of why you think they have no common sense? One way to think about this question is to think of a time when you did not use common sense. Can you remember such a experience? What happened?

All right, this one goes out to our ol' friend Sheerly, who is an incredibly special colleague and friend. See you at the workshops, or, in the pages of The Beat Within.

**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

**To our writers:** What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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**Art:** Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

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### My Anger

No one knows what anger I've got in me. I have so much anger that if anyone explored it, they would sweat and melt. They would not be able to take it. If they were able to see my anger, they would see this place of darkness. They would see something so horrible that they would wish they hadn't seen. It is something way beyond my control. All the bullshhhh, all that negativity. All the unfairness, all the wrong that people have to give. All that they have to do. Why?

Nobody understands me and nobody ever will. I don't open up, and I'm by myself. Everybody is against me. Everybody is out to get me. It's me against the whole world. So depressed, so sad, so angry, just so angry. My feelings, the feelings I've felt, so crucial.

Everything is just so confusing. The pain I've felt, nobody knows how it feels. I know that. The anger is powerful enough to kill. So sad, so depressed, so irritated, so mad, just so angry. Words can't even explain it. It's beyond all of that. To hell with everything! Leave me alone!

**-Ramon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We can't leave you alone. You have too much going for you for us to do that! We can't know the depth of your feelings, Ramon, but we can tell you, from reading you before, that it's not "everybody against Ramon." You have some people in your corner. The anger is real. The darkness is real. The bullshhhh, negativity, unfairness, pain and depression are all real. But we think the most important thing you've identified is confusion. It is normal for any boy your age to feel confusion, but it's exaggerated when you're going through as much as you're going through. We hope you can hold on (don't do anything stupid), because we feel sure that these feelings will change as you move into adulthood and gain more and more control over your own life. The most important person to be on your side is you!

### Recognize Your Opportunities

My stop sign is opportunities. I think about my opportunities and what I could have before I do anything. I think that people should look deep inside and look at what they could've had or could've been.

Some situations get you to think about what you could've done and who you could've been. For example, I always hear my family and coaches say if I would've... I could've.

But if you think now and look at the great opportunities you do have, you will understand and see you want to be able to see and tell you grandkids and kids what you were and who you saw and where you been. Different problems and people open opportunities and close opportunities. Like this one I'm in...

I don't think I should be in here, but god has me in here for a reason. I understand why that is, and it is to never be back, because this is not where I belong. I should be with my family having fun and enjoying the great things I have. I have a loving mom and I know that if there was two loafs of bread, she would give them to me and my sister.

And my stepfather, I love him for everything he does. He took me under his wing even though him and my mom broke up. I just want people to understand that opportunities are there. Just be patient and let god guide you to the light.

**-Yanoj, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It's hard for us to understand how someone as wise as you, as thoughtful as you, as intelligent as you, could find himself in a place like this. You have such a positive attitude and mature outlook that we think you've learned what you needed to learn in order to continue your life in freedom. You are very lucky, not just to have the loving family you have, but to appreciate them and what they mean in your life. Thank you for this.

### Right Most of the Time

(My Personal Stop Signs)

What's good with it Beat!

A personal stop sign can be a funny feeling like the one you get while you're stealing or the one you get when you're dealing. It's the voice inside you that's very appealing and it's always helpful and forever healing. That's the reason why I'm never out killing.

It helps me out to a certain extent and it always urges me to repent—but I always seem to get in trouble and it seems to stop me on the double.

I then stop to think about my action but I still do it to my satisfaction.

So now I think I have to listen more then life will open up its doors.

To me, it's just a path way and to other's it's a right way.

So try to listen to your voice or don't, because it's your choice.

Just try to do right most of the time

and I promise you that it'll be better than any crime.

**-Shadow, Solano**

**From The Beat:** We think you're making a lot of sense, and that it's true—if you listen to your voice, to your instincts—life will open up its doors. You have a powerful creative voice that will also be fun to listen to.

### Personal Stop Sign

Everyone has a personal "stop sign." It is sometimes referred to as the conscious or ones moral thought. We all reach a certain point where we face the choice of right and wrong. It can also range from important and crucial decision or a lesser one.

People's "stop signs" can all be different. All are different emotional anchors that even trigger the question of right or wrong. It can even trigger the question of right or wrong. It can stem from an extreme influence of another or to (something else).

**-Ou, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** This is a very impressive bit of deep thinking and writing! It's clear that you didn't have time to finish the piece, which is too bad for us! With such a clear understanding of the moral choices your conscience presents to you, we'd be very interested to know how you weighed those choices, and came down on the side that led you here... What happens after here?

### Grasp Onto My Hat

Subsequently I'm feeling a lil' ill mentally got these flows going out of me so do you feel this lil' remedy, I'm making unreal become reality and I make still move frantically you see, it's sad to see such tragedy something like agony and ecstasy. Ha ha ha you know I'm still just playing Beat but I got this for you peeps check it.

I come hard with bloody scars from my heart to the point where I need to grasp onto my hat just sit back and relax 'cause my conscious is callin' but reality's too damn far so I take a breath let that smoke penetrate through my head now what's next now I'm walkin' with the dead

**-Smiley, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We like the way this flows. Hold tight to that hat—reality just is what it is, it isn't far...You may see the depth of your choices, you may even fear your conscience—but it won't go away if it's callin'...You have to answer, one way or another. Live with love, not fear.



### These Rhymes

As I write these rhymes, I'm incarcerated  
for drug deals and murders, I'm investigated.  
They irritated; don't want me released.  
I talk bad about snitches, I don't mess with police  
I'm a beast, king short-stopppa,  
first ninja with the red beam car beam chopppa,  
drug dealer, but I'm lonely  
'cause the 'hood so phony,  
and girls, they don't know me.  
Yeah, they say they love me and keep my letters fat, accept  
my calls, love letters and all that,  
but where they at?  
What else could I ask for?  
I need a girl that understands this war,  
not a regular girl that shop at convenient stores,  
but a student like me that knows what the game for,  
want more  
I'm tired of being around girls that ain't with it.  
I'm a soldier and people gone feel my pain.  
Dead or alive, thugs remember me, and they copy huh.  
But I ain't even famous.  
I'm in jail writing raps on a yellow paper.  
I'm able to see past these walls  
and I see people walking around running they jaw.  
Crack still ball while the casket fall,  
and people having sex raw.  
Why these snitches call  
on a neighborhood hustla shooting dice,  
while my ninjas in the hall shooting kites?  
It ain't right!  
Working for them people ain't either,  
or going to the army killing kids ain't either,  
or going to the church being entertained  
by a ex-pimp, same suit, same thang.  
Lil' lame for spame, square bear from Delaware.,  
Now you know why them feds wanna hate a real playa. They  
hate me, Beat, but I'm platinum like lil' Teddy said: they gone  
hate you for whatever you do.  
They gone hate you if you be a bum,  
so you might as well be that ninja ball beat 'cause it's fun like that.

**-Lil' Purp, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We wish you could turn your skills as a rhyme master into some deeper thinking about the world and your place in it. You say you'll be remembered, dead or alive, but if you're dead, you won't even know if anyone remembers you or not! A soldier's job is to do what he's told, to kill and to die for someone else's cause. If killed, that soldier is quickly forgotten as another steps into his place. You have a mind that could take you far from places like this and give you an entirely new perspective on the future. But, apparently, being "a beast" is more important to you than being a responsible man. When your level of maturity catches up to your level of intelligence, we think you could go as far as you want in this world.*

### My Past

Hey Beat, what's up?

I'd like to tell you something about me and my past.  
You notice the poems I write. They are about my ex-foster  
mom and my real mom.

You see when I was seven, I lived with a foster mom. I  
lived with her because I got sexually abused by my mom.  
They gave her another chance after my foster mom died.

When I was eleven, I was officially taken away from my  
mom. This happened because my mom had been sexually  
abusing me and I finally had enough and screamed where  
someone could hear me. Ever since then I have done some  
stupid and crazy stuff. Anyways Beat I don't know what  
else to say so bye.

**-Stacks, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: This is some heavy stuff you went through and we admire you for having the courage to write about it. Keep writing and sharing, so that you can try to put both the pain of that trauma - as well as the "stupid and crazy stuff" you've done- behind you.*

### Hard Life

From the hall to the county then to the state  
penitentiary  
I'm incarcerated physically, emotionally, and mentally  
Man, I'm not gonna lie, shhh gone get hard through time  
It's a great struggle mountain, and I got to climb  
If I die, I hope I die in my sleep  
Please God open your gate 'cause the devil playing for  
keeps  
Going to court and I'm looking at the judge's eyes  
Right away I know that it was Justice that God sent from  
the sky  
I been a soul survivor since it was my birthday  
Vietnam war zone, that was my birthplace  
Mom and pop have to work hard for the money  
Story about my life up until now, ain't shhh funny  
In this world, in this life nothing is fair  
The hatred, the guns, the drugs always gone be there  
The road I chose to walk is bumpy and is long  
As I match every footstep I know I was on my own  
Sometimes when I go to sleep, I be dreaming  
Satan in my head, got me woke up sweating and  
screaming  
Man, I hope my life don't end with a gun or knife  
But if I do, I got to accepted 'cause I living that hard life

**-Lil' Chopstick, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: With skills like yours, you should not despair/ There's much you can do to clear your head, to clear the air/ From the War in Vietnam to America's inner-city strife/ You've had to suffer much in your still young life/ But with your strength of character and your keen mind/ There's a world of love and achievement for you to find/ Look deep within your heart and soul and tell us if you see/ A boy who's made mistakes, yet longs to be free/ It's up to you, it's in your hands/ You can still become the good man of your parents' plans!*

### On My Way To The Top

What's poppin with The Beat? Me, shhh, just up in this  
G-thang ready to get on, ya know! But I'm out this thang  
on the 15th. I'm on my way to the top.

I ain't tryna keep getting pulled down by somebody  
else bullshhh, man. I'm on my way to the top! I'm on my  
way to the top, and I'm leavin' everybody behind. It's time  
to do me and get my shhh together. It's time fo' me to get  
my head up out the gutta 'cause I'm on my way to the  
top!

I'ma still rock with the goons off top, but I'ma just do  
me til this probation shhh wear off. I'm tired of wearin'  
somebody else's panties and somebody else's shirt and  
pants. And to be honest, purple and khaki don't even  
look good on me. It don't even match.

But ya know, I'ma be me regardless 'cause I'm on my  
way to the top! And I'ma be on my way to the top by myself!  
What the top means to me is to get my act together, not  
let nobody drag me down with them, and just be me, stop  
coming to Juvenile and try to stay at home more, follow  
my curfew and court orders.

I want to be a choreographer and teach Hip Hop.  
I'ma go to school, get good grades, and I already dance  
everywhere. I dance in other people's groups and  
sometimes I watch good dancers and they motivate me to  
wanna dance more.

**-Smokey, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We love that you dance, that you want to follow your probation conditions and get off paper, that you won't be brought down by others. But we don't love that you plan to continue to "rock with your goons" at the same time as you're trying to reach the top. You can't live two lives, be doing the things you know you must do while at the same time playing around the edges with your homies doing the things you know you must not do. Be very, very careful... Your goals are far too important to risk on childish nonsense!*

### Granny's Prayer

Granny, Granny, Granny, Granny  
 Why they had to take big mamma away  
 Mama I'm going crazy  
 I'm all screwed up  
 I'm going crazy  
 I'm all screwed up  
 My mamma put me out, daddy left the house  
 She took me in quick and put food in my mouth  
 Go to church every Sunday, I know she ain't hear me  
 Now I'm walking 'round strapped hoping they test me  
 Momma hurt, daddy hurt, Kani hurt... Damn!  
 The boys hurt, the girls hurt, that hurt the whole family  
 Now I'm walking round every day like I don't give a damn  
 Itching for killing,  
 Tryna get me some healing  
 10 million won't make me happy  
 All I want is my Granny  
 Her and mamma the only ones that understand me  
 On concert nights she get worried  
 And sit down in the kitchen:  
 "Hoping God help me keep my Grandson careful"

**-Doug E., San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** One of the most dangerous things about "walking around strapped" is that it makes you want to be tested; it puts you in situations you wouldn't put yourself in if not for that deadly toy. Don't you see, Doug, your dear Granny wants you alive, wants you to live as long as she has lived. She knows the treasure she has in you, just as you know the treasure you have in her. Stop itching for a killing and realize that everyone's death leaves someone's grandma weeping forever. She has sacrificed so much for you. Now it's time to return the favor.

### ... Mommy ...

The life I was given, mommy, is so unfair. Having a deadbeat father who's never there. Having one try to replace him but that too, fails, for he's locked up all the time. You were good, could have been better and made it about me and not your husband.

Down the road getting older, think the "hood" life is my savior. Smokin', fightin', drinkin', popin' was fun at the time till bad things happened at the end. Having to call you when I need you the most, when I thought I never would need you. Not having a place to live, moving around even to different states.

Why did we go down the path we did? Why'd you take me down with you? I'm 17 years old, in love, locked up. No real place to live and after four years you come to my rescue. Why now? What made things different? Did you think without talking about our life things would be let go? That's what I thought.

After all the years of fighting with you, running from you, being locked up has shown me that you and I is all I count on. What I need. You're all I have and you're the only one with me. I just want you to know that no matter what happened between you and me, I know we've been through it all but remember that I love you. I always have. Being a hardheaded adolescent doesn't help the life we have. I pray night and day that I get let out on that Thursday, because God knows that me being in here has only brought you and I together, and we need each other.

Mommy I've never had a hero, but I think you're my hero. Despite everything in the past, mommy, you're my everything and I need you more than ever. I need your help so I can help you! I love you mommy and God be with you always! Love, your daughter.

**-Serenna, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** A long trip, but a happier ending than you imagined. And it isn't even the end. You're breathing. Your mom is too. May you have many, many happy years to enjoy one another.

### I'm Sorry

How can I start this off? I love my family to the dearest and all I can say now is that I'm sorry. I'm sorry for hurting you. I'm sorry for doing the same shhh all the time. I'm sorry for forcing you to pay all that money. I'm just sorry.

Now I'm looking at a lot of time for a charge that I don't deserve. On top of that, I might miss my child's birth. It's hard knowing I'm killing my family, my girl, and myself. I'm tired of hurting people that love me and would do anything for me. All I can say is I'm sorry.

I got my girl stressing. It ain't good for my kid. I can't even get a few minutes to talk to her. But when I get the chance to talk to her and my family, I'll say that I'm sorry and that I changed. It's gonna be up to them to believe me, and it's gonna be up to me to show them that I really changed.

I got the big man on my shoulder telling me to do right, but instead I do the opposite. Now, I'm finally growing up from a kid to a man, betta start takin' care of my responsibilities and be there for my child, unlike my father that wasn't there for me. It ain't an excuse, so forget what I said about my dad. I'ma be there for my child and family. So what I'ma say right now is I'm sorry, and that I changed.

**-Et, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Every word in this piece confirms your statement that you're "growing up from a kid to a man." These are the words of maturity, and they speak loud and clear! You know your family loves you even when you disappoint them (and yourself), and that is why you feel so guilty. Growing up without a father may not be "an excuse" for the things you're sorry about, but it certainly contributed to the difficulties you've had making that transition from boy to man. But now that you are a man — and you are — we believe you will become your child's father, and your family's pride.

### My Hero

When he was bitty kitty we was living around rats  
 Now we all grow up,

we are one of the solid and wealthy cats  
 Men these crackers kept us separated  
 for almost about a year

Sometime when I called you,  
 you say you missed me and dropped a tear  
 You told me to keep my head up  
 and the devil we can't fear

You told me  
 if you can switch place with me right now you would  
 You said "be patient and everything gon' be good"

You always got my back, you watch every step I move  
 When I'm down or in trouble, I know where to run to  
 I'm riding shotgun and you be the driver

You always help me to make choices wiser  
 We always had fun and a lot of good memories  
 Even when I die, I hope you never forget the things you  
 did for me

Everything I ever did, I hope you forgive me  
 I went from a boy to a man I know you see me  
 Aye real talk bro' I'm missing you like crazy  
 Everywhere I go, I know you are going to be with me  
 You my best friend, my angel and my hero  
 I get one love for you is surpassed a million zero

**-Lil' Chopstick, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** It's amazing how in the middle of hate and sadness, you find it in yourself to write an inspiring poem about your hero, one that reminds us how much strength there is to be found in other people. We hope he gets a copy too, so he can see how much he means to you!

### The Streets of War

The bleeding tides are crushing upon the streets of war.  
We slowly close our brothers eyes as they will see no more.  
Our breathing comes more painfully as our hearts are filled with dread.  
We will never fear what is to come while blood must still be shed.

And as our duty on these streets scar us as deep as the veins of the earth,  
it's a duty we've known was meant for us ever since our birth.  
So now we are pushing forward with our fallen ninjas on our backs.  
As the fog rolls in and clouds our eyes, we are never looking back.  
Seeking revenge is all we know best.

Descending down upon us, we come as quick as light –  
a storm of bullets and thunder from our chops that wakes up the night.  
Our adrenaline is rushing, our pulses beating in our minds.  
This hell is raining down before us. It's come, it's here, our time.

Reacting without thinking, cold sweat beading on our face,  
we strike back  
and unleash a hell.  
Not once do I regret the things I've done for reasons untold,  
though part of me is still yearning for the chance to grow old.  
RIP. G-Dubb

**-Lil' Tone, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a wonderful piece of writing and we feel appreciate your sharing it with us here at The Beat Within. We hope you feel proud of it, 'cause it is so clear the care you took in choosing your language and constructing the passages. Your imagery is vivid, so painful and full of heart, and you are so honest about this experience and this life. We feel so deeply the way the life in your hood is like a war, and that adds to the imagery you chose and the message. We hear the honesty in that you do not regret your actions and at the same time have a small gnawing desire to have a different outcome to your life than you figure you have right now. So, we want to say that it is not too late to bury your dead, honor your past and the choices you've made (and why you've made them), yet choose anew the next time around. You are clearly a very good writer, an intelligent person, and you applied yourself enough to create this wonderful piece of writing- you can do more, in writing and in the rest of life. Why not let your yearning come into reality? It is not too late to create a life in which you can grow old.

### The Story Of The Phoenix

I am the phoenix who came from ashes  
Tall dark complexion, long eyelashes  
From day to day I live life on edge  
I feel like a flowerpot placed on the ledge  
I fly from harm and protect my flock  
If we are flying together or alone on the block  
I am head hard and with that comes great responsibility  
My flock depends on me to eat  
They depend on me for stability  
But I am just one bird  
How can I do such things?  
It's like I'm trying to fly away  
But my flock has my wings  
So me, the poor phoenix  
Must continue to lead the flock  
To me the land I have promised  
Which to them is no shock

**-Fresh, Marin**

**From The Beat:** It is your instinct to lead and protect your flock, your people. But if you resort to anything illegal to provide for them, you just show them that they and you can't rely on and trust in the outside world to support and reward all of you for your imagination, initiative, reliability and hard work. You need a solid foundation, yourself, in honest work, to become the bulwark for your people.

### My Stop Sign, My Mom

My stop sign is my greatest love,  
She is the person who I knew my whole life,  
She is my mom, I thank the man from up above,  
She put clothes on my back and a roof to survive,  
It blocks out the sun and the rain,  
She stops all the possible pains,  
What goes from good to bad, she makes it stop,  
If it wasn't for my mother, my body would drop,  
Mom, I just want to tell you "I love you,"  
You're the sun that shines, and why the sky is blue,  
you're the reason I stopped, you said "I told you"  
I'm sorry Momma, I've reached my quota.

**-Saetern, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a great tribute to your mother. It blows our mind how much parents, especially mothers, sacrifice and do for their children. And if they can do that, it's good to know you're doing what you can for her, protecting yourself and her from the worst of her fears, that something horrible might happen to you.

### Screw The World

Man, the title says it all, and I gone keep it real  
'Cause it's all fake if I ain't speaking how I feel  
Tick, tock, tick, tock, the clock is ticking  
As people pointing fingers, I continuously finger flicking  
'Ey Pac, you say screw the world and I can feel your pain  
'Cause living that thug life makes us go insane  
My family sending me pictures and put on a fake smile  
I can feel their pain 'cause I been away for a while  
I got the brother's picture right in front of my face  
I hope he be with me when I get to the bigger place  
Man, all I ever wanted was to go from rags to riches  
But around the waist they got dude real life hitches  
In my room, walking back and forth thinking what I should write  
But when I cry, word just come out like freak come out at night  
I'm writing this so I can release my anger and thoughts  
It's a long and hard battle I got to fought  
I got no one, upset my mama, which is my favorite girl  
So now you know why the lil' homie say screw the world

**-Lil' Chopstick, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Yes, we can understand why you are so angry at yourself and the world. But the problem with saying "Screw the world," is that you are part of the world, and if you get your wish, you get screwed too! Your tears are appropriate for the situation you find yourself in, but the way to change the picture is not to "curse the darkness" but to "light a candle." Which means, you have it in your power to make some changes in how you live that will also change your outlook and brighten your future. We hope you do!

### Mind Makes Reality

Man this is bull, but I'm kinda happy because I'm getting out in 2 months and 5 days. I can't wait till my release, because I know I earned it. I earn my freedom back. That's one of the best feelings a person can have, a feeling knowing they earn their freedom back. But man this place and doing this time sure does make a person think and reminisce about their past and future. And I learn not to get too greedy, and get caught up doing too much. So yeah man I learned not to do too much, not get too greedy. There's a saying in this book that says, "Mind makes Reality and Reality makes Mind." S

o if in my heart and mind I know I am happy without money and power, then I rather be happy with living with nothing with my freedom, than having nothing at all without my freedom.

**-Ngyuen, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a great piece, thanks for sharing. Earning something like your freedom back is something to really be proud of, and it does apply to the rest of your life. If earning your freedom makes you feel so great, imagine what earning your living with hard work would feel like. If you can say you earned it, and earned it without having to risk giving up your freedom, what more can you ask for?



### Promises

Broken promises, tears shedding, and shattered dreams.  
 Pain is what I caused you.  
 I know the things I did were childish.  
 I've realized that, but I thought it was too late for redemption,  
 no source of hope, but then there you were to guide me.  
 Your healing touch gave me faith.  
 You never left my side, whether it was laughter or tears,  
 you are there through whatever.  
 You did everything for me to have a good life.  
 It wasn't your fault that I fell.  
 It was the "friends" I chose –  
 but there you were to pick me up, even though I changed  
 for the worse.  
 Drugs, alcohol, gangs...you never stopped caring.  
 So now it's my turn. I've turned my life around.  
 So I promise to make you happy.  
 I promise to do good. I promise to always stay strong.  
 I promise to make all our dreams come true.  
 I'm determined I won't stop trying.  
 Never give up and never ever lose faith.  
 I promise no more broken promises, no more broken  
 laughter.  
 I promise the only tears you will cry will be of joy.  
 I promise to always do my best.  
 I promise to be the best daughter I can possibly be.  
 I promise to love you forever, promise to always be there,  
 promise that now it's my turn to take care of you.  
 I promise to make you happy, but most of all, I promise  
 to make you proud.  
 I love you mom. For you I'd do anything and everything.  
 Your unconditional love I'll cherish.  
 You mean the world to me, my mother, my protector, my  
 lifesaver, my only hope.  
 My best friend. I love you mom. Remember my promises,  
 They will come true.  
 Thank you for always being there, my support system.  
 I love you so much. Love your baby girl, your daughter.  
 I love you and I do care. I apologize for my mistakes.  
 I promise everything's gonna get better, I swear. Love,  
 your daughter.

**-Christina, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Cut this one out of The Beat and send it your mom. We look forward to reading more from you on your journey to a better life!*

### My "Stop Sign," My Brother

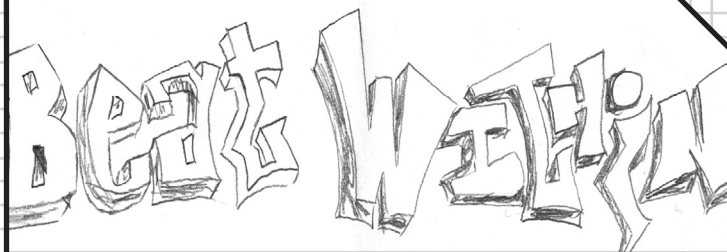
My stop sign is my older brother. I look up to my brother,  
 and when I left my mom's house, he took me under his  
 wing. He isn't the best "influence" but he has always been  
 there for me. I always used to kick it with him and the  
 hood and when someone would want to go do something,  
 he would tell me to stay back, so I don't get into it. But I  
 would always end up going and get caught up.

Now, he's locked up with three strikes, 50 to life with  
 no chance of parole. When the judge told my brother that,  
 he cried in the court. I never thought he would cry, but  
 he's been to the pen and knows how it is. It's not cool.

So every time I want to mess up, I think of his face in  
 the court that day.

**-Dragon, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Your brother knew better than to let you go down the path leading to more prison time. You mention that you think about his experience and use it as your stop sign. If you want honor your brother's efforts, one thing you can do is to show him beyond staying out of trouble. What else can you accomplish that will make your brother proud?*



### How I Hurt Her

How I hurt her when I was coming into the world on Dec  
 2nd, 1991.  
 How I hurt her when I stayed with my Auntie & Uncle.  
 How I hurt her when I threw a fit about her going out to  
 the club.  
 How I hurt her by when I cried cause I didn't get what I  
 want.  
 How I hurt her when I failed first grade.  
 How I hurt her when I told her I lost my virginity.  
 How I hurt her when I yelled back at her when it was my  
 daddy's fault.  
 How I hurt her when I fought her and she wouldn't fight  
 back.  
 How I hurt her by talking to boys or grown men years  
 older than me.  
 How I hurt her by living with other people.  
 How I hurt her by being away.  
 How I hurt her when I cried for my Great Granny after she  
 died.  
 How I hurt her when I tried to stop her and her dad from  
 fighting.  
 How I hurt her by wanting to go to her dad's funeral or  
 getting to know her mom.  
 How I hurt her by not wanting to visit my great-granddad  
 before he died.  
 How I hurt her when I took everything for advantage,  
 when she bought me shoes, clothes, jewelry, and other  
 stuff she couldn't pay for.  
 How I hurt her by dropping out of school.  
 How I hurt by blaming everything on her.  
 How I hurt her when I mistreated my older brother and  
 sister.  
 How I hurt her by having boys spend the night at the  
 house after she said "No."  
 How I hurt her by sneaking out at night, not coming  
 back.  
 How I hurt her by lying and coming to California.  
 How I hurt her even worse by callin' her... I'm locked up  
 for prostitution.

There are many ways I hurt her after she struggled  
 with four kids, not raised by her parents, lost the parents  
 she had, lost the house and money that we had, or how  
 we still in debt living in this nice two story house with a  
 Denali. But guess what, we still struggling and we still  
 broke. But I'm so spoiled, bad, out of control, that I don't  
 see that she works so hard, bends over backwards to give  
 me everything I want and I need...

This is how I hurt my mother, also known as my  
 queen. Love ya Mugzie.

**-Kishna, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: You say you're so spoiled that you don't see all your mother's. But it's clear from this powerful piece that the guilt you're feeling is a sign of maturity. The things that you feel so bad about were the acts of a child, and all children are selfish! (But no child should have to endure what you suffered!) What you are feeling now are the pangs of a young woman, seeing the world for what it really is. You are becoming the responsible, decent woman your mom has always known was there, ready to emerge.*



### Twenty-Four Hour Starbucks

You want to know, know what really happened?  
That day we were all together laughing, loving, then we pulled out the bottle.

Not thinking twice, down it went.

Now drinking, laughing and loving.

We fell, we danced, we partied.

She brought him. I was in love with someone else.

He said, "Hi, I'm Donnie, you're cute."

From that moment on my life changed, forever.

He joined in the mix. We were all experimenting, some a little too much.

He stood near. Turning around, looking over my shoulder, he'd be there.

More and more went in me. The more I took, the less I cared.

Starting to not notice what was really happening I continued to party,

but the party took a toll.

Sick all the way from the bottom of my stomach, I felt it come.

Hot and uncomfortable, it came.

Crying and laughing, way past done, they all tried to help.

Since they were all, as well, way past done it didn't exactly work.

Ending up in the back of a hot crammed car with the one, who I guess wasn't yet to the point the rest of us were.

Purposely? It was Donnie, the man that was standing always a little too close.

"Let me help you," he said.

Still way too sick, it kept coming up.

My head out the window, he pulled me in and offered me some water in an open cup.

I didn't hesitate to gulp down the cold water.

Feeling better I sat up.

I asked him to unroll all the windows but he didn't say or do anything.

Instead he looked me dead in my eyes and something about

those eyes told me

something wasn't right.

Faster than I can remember, he grabbed me.

Trying to kiss me, I pushed him away.

"Come on baby, you know you want it," he cried.

Still with the one I loved, I said "NO."

Trying to scream but all that came out was a whisper.

Forceful hands groping and pulling at the valleys and hills of my landscape.

Way too weak to fight back, the only defense I had were my whispers.

"Let me go!", "Help!", "Please stop!". But no one heard.

There I was alone, completely alone with Donnie.

Salty tears ran down my face.

Make-up smeared, heart pounding, I tried to push, but he pushed back.

No way was I able to escape this.

Then it went black.

Waking up hot and sweaty I crawled out of the car, no Donnie in sight.

Zippping my pants, I sat and cried.

Sore and broken, my innocence was taken.

Never did I want it that way.

To this day I remember that night, that was hard to remember.

I remember the night I've been trying to forget.

I rememer every tattoo, every piercing, the color of his eyes, his hair,

the way he reeked of vodka, cheap cologne, and Marlboros.

I remember the night they didn't hear my cries, the night I wasn't saved.

He took my power away. Little does he know, I have taken it back.

Dear Donnie, you'll get yours.

**-Strong and Proud, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is a disturbing story and we are very sorry that it's one you have to tell. We hope that talking about your experience will help you to feel a bit better. It's good to get rotten stuff, like this, out.

### Wake Up and Smell the Coffee

I don't believe in the "death penalty." The government is no better than the murderers because they're killing people too. So, why aren't the people who are flipping the switch on the electric chair, or the people putting the needle in a prisoner's arm, or the ones calling the shots locked up? Why aren't they on death row themselves? Aren't they doing what some of the people on death row are doing? It's funny to me, because who made them judge and in charge of my life? Whether I could live or not? To me that's a bunch of BS! Only God has that choice.

The government should try and rehabilitate the people on death row facing the death penalty, even if it takes life without parole. They shouldn't kill them like they are animals. The system is screwed up! The government is no better than us! They're a bunch of hypocrites that need to understand people are people. America needs to wake up and smell the coffee, cause there are people getting ignored and abused.

**-A Pissed Off American, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We really like your well-written argument. It's a very powerful question to ask: Do we have the right to take away another person's life regardless of what he/she has done? Does the death penalty jive with Christian ideals and moral? We appreciate how you've thought this out and end your piece by emphasizing that the people who are on death row have no voice and we as a society need to pay attention to their needs too.

### Bullets Fly More Than Birds

In the hood a lot goes on it's like being a soldier in Iraq we're in a war zone. To pit bull fights, biting each other with large chompers to getting chased by swat, police and the helicopters.

People dying in the streets over money and drugs they teach us to grow up to be little anger thugs. In my hood they got whatever you need from coke, crack, thizz, shrooms, and dark purple weed.

The hood is a jungle so you learned how to survive because ninjas don't hesitate about taking your life. Bullets fly in the air more often than birds be very careful where you go & watch your words.

Ninjas a pull you in the hood will spit you out, ninjas try to leave everyday but die before they get out. Ninjas swing cars fresh off the lot, prostitutes up and down the block.

Being in the hood is a full time job. Every where you look another ninja getting' robbed. Whatever see in the hood you never snitch because ninjas a put yo momma, daddy and you in the same ditch. In the hood ghetto stay in the house & don't get caught up running yo mouth.

**-Jaron, Solano**

**From The Beat:** This is good writing, full of details that bring it to life. You don't mention how you live through all this, or what, knowing all you do about it, you plan for your future there—or away from there.

### Why

Why was I put here?  
To suffer in this world  
Most people live in fear  
We all have to fit in a mold  
Some think the end is near  
But I stand in place, strong and bold

Why does it matter how I live  
When all you do is judge me  
It's not enough, all I can give  
I'm trying to be all I can be  
Whatever I know, I'll strive  
I'd move far away where you can't see

Why do you care if I choose to smoke?  
Make me feel good, let's me forget  
Every time I take a toke  
Just smelling the weed gets my lips wet  
I love how it's potent and make me choke  
Don't fear for me it's not a threat

Why don't you like it when I drink?  
It's cool to get drunk while I'm high  
Clear my mind, don't let me think  
So much pain but at least I try  
In drugs and alcohol I'd like to sink  
'Cause when I don't, I break down and cry

**-Strong and Bold, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This sends a sharp arrow into all of our hearts, especially when you mentioned, "... 'cause when I don't, I break down and cry." You began by putting up tough questions and in a defensive way. In the end, you tell us that much of your defense and substance use is to cope with sadness and disappointment. We understand and hope that with all your intelligence and sharp writing that you'll find other ways to channel your feelings.

*Sister I hate thinking  
that you are gone.*

### RIP Tanika

I miss her. I wish I could just kiss you and hold you, play fight with you and just have fun with you, take you to places you never seen...

You probably think I'm talking bout my girl but I'm talking bout my sister... damn I love you Tanika. She passed away and it was the worst day of my life. Sister I know you're watching me from heaven and just know I miss you and I promise I'm go take care of what I told you the day you died...

Maybe if it wasn't for your boyfriend the man I told you to stay away from you would still be alive. Sister I hate thinking that you are gone. I remember when you left a message on my phone. The day you died and said, "brother, I'll be there at eight, I love you."

But I get a phone call at 8:15 and your pronounced dead. One shot to the head.

Now that breaks me down each and everyday. I love you. Rest in Paradise Tanika Wade.

**-Clay Dizzle, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Everything you wrote, about the loss and suffering you feel, has had us wondering about forgiveness. "To err is human, to forgive is divine" right? Have you been thinking about whether or not you could ever forgive and find some healing from this terrible tragedy?

### Help Me

This is the sea life, and I'm drownin'  
I know I could swim, but feels like I keep sinkin' down in  
These waters and I can't breathe, I feel like I'm goin' blow it  
I can see people holdin' a life jacket but they won't throw it  
entertained by my struggle and they love to see me die  
Why not love to see me live instead of helping my family cry?  
Like a homeless person wit a sign, "I would work for food"  
Ain't no shame of bein' helpless it's a part of payin' dues on an everyday mission tryin to collect 5's and 10's  
So many worries I promise my bones show right though my skin  
Fancy cars and a mansion? That ain't never been my goal  
A hooptie would be fine, plus somewhere warm when its cold  
I know what it feels like, not to be able to call the shots  
I have a pen but no time to connect all da dots  
Therefore I do what I could do and then I get down on my knees  
'cause I can't make it by my loneliness, Jesus help a ninja please!!

**-Mookie, Solano**

**From The Beat:** This is good writing. Nice details, metaphors, wordplay. What exactly, would help you? Are you asking for that?

### Posted in Paradise

Banging is my mentality  
another fallen casualty  
too many tragedies  
blood flowing on the streets  
look, another enemy  
code back and the trigger squeeze  
boom watch how they freeze  
now homeboys riding for me  
my picture on a white T  
homies crying over me  
pouring out 40's and Hennessy  
knocking those four-fifteens  
now I'm laid six feet  
father saying his RIP.s  
all because they came for me  
posted in the paradise  
on the block with my nine  
took someone else's life  
because they tried to take mine  
now I'm facing a murder charge  
in the halls living large  
want to run up get hit hard  
represent my boulevard  
got going to the pen do nothing less then 10  
stuck someone it's the end did it all over again  
now I'm serving the whole time  
doing 25 to life  
hit the pen with two kids and no wife  
now I got to earn my stripes  
down with my side  
sorry vatos gotta die  
damn it was all a dream  
'cause I'm at camp when I opened my eyes.

**-G-Shadow, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This dream you wrote was so vivid that it made us see every picture as if we were in it with you. And of course it's the reality for so many people who get caught up. Is this your reality? Your future? We hope not, because that would be a waste of a huge talent, and a huge heart.



## Loyalty

Loyalty, trust, respect, are the words I live by. Loyalty above all laws, and although I've made some drastic changes for my life, and some may even say that I'm a hypocrite, because I wasn't loyal to a certain lifestyle, but I realized that I had to change.

Drugs, alcohol, violence and gangs, death and tears, broken laughter turns into sobs, smiles then turn to frowns. But truly ask yourself, for what? Yeah, yeah, for the "cause" right, for your "hood", but most of all to be accepted, to be known, for RESPECT, but truly nobody respects you. Look into the eyes of that person and tell me, is it respect you see or is it fear?

I know it took me awhile to realize this, that at the end it's truly not worth it. Drugs, gangs, crime, and even the death of friends. I really didn't think I would make it to this point in my life. I'm glad I chose this way 'cause if you're a homie or not, look at it this way, we all have families. Try to envision your funeral, people all around dressed in black, tears continuously dropping, so much overwhelming pain. What is everyone going to remember you by? For the man or lady you could be, or for that homeboy or homegirl who died putting in work? Words of regret flutter through minds, soon days will pass, months, then years.

Soon you'll just be a mere memory, just until another homie falls. How long will that take? Not long, huh. Sure, they'll be a few RIP tats somewhere, but you'll soon be forgotten. It's sad, but true. Do something positive with your life.

Put down the pipe, the blunt, the bottle. Think for a second - are you smart enough to realize how precious life is, how every second you should cherish it. People die everyday, but they seem to get younger and younger, they're still babies and never had the chance to experience life's treasures, and don't blame God for your mistakes, don't ask why. It was your decision to make that choice. I understand - some of you - it's all you ever knew.

You were born into that hood life. But you can always change, but the clock is ticking. You better have a reality check before it's too late. Time is closing in. I made the

mistake of showing this style of living to someone I love dearly, someone I love so much nothing can come between us, although we've had our ups and downs. I screwed up. That person is my little brother. He looked up to me. Some role model I am, huh? I want him to live that good life, not the gang life. I made a promise to myself, plus someone else. I made a change. I'm a better person. I hope he gets his head outta the clouds and realizes we all love him, that we don't want to lose him. I'm locked up, yes, but no, it didn't take me being here to realize all of this.

I'm taking it step by step and believe it or not, I'm going somewhere with my life and nope, not the pita. I'm an educated young lady with lots of potential. I'm determined to live a better life. I'm driven. I won't stop till I'm satisfied and I know I will have my wonderful supportive mother, my lil bro, my sister, my bestie, and even my lil doggie Peanut haha...

I'm living proof anything and everything is possible no matter how deep in you are. "Trust" I should know. One more thing to add, if they truly love and care for you, they'll understand why you want to change and they will have even more respect for you. Who knows, maybe you'll inspire them to change too. I know some of you say once you bang you always bang, you can't stop.

Nope, not true, I know plenty of OG's who have changed. So yes, I'm from San Jose, but with my family is where I belong. And I don't mean any of my words to be disrespectful. I hope this is an inspiration to someone, if I even get you thinking about my words. I got my message clear, that's all I really wanted.

There is hope. I'd like to dedicate this piece to my little brother - you know who you are. I love you bro, so much. I have your name tattooed on me, and that's how long I'll be here for you. "Forever". Keep your head up. I miss you. Chin up, always remember I'm gonna be here through thick and thin. Much love and respect.

**-Loyal Big Sister, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You have many reasons to make good on your intentions. Our best thoughts are with you. You've said so much, we really are left without words. Keep thinking, keep writing. Soon enough you'll get to test your resolve.

*...if you do not have "common sense" then you will probably keep coming back here...*

## My First Real Romantic Relationship

I never had a real relationship with a girl until now. The reason I started having a relationship with a girl, because I never met a girl that I could feel good telling her all my problems, like me getting in deep trouble that I won't tell anyone else to.

I trust her. She tell me when she stressed out, and it always make us stop stressing. Then we started having good conversation. Right now I can't talk to her when I'm stressed out because I got locked up.

I think about her every night before I go to sleep. Now I realize I miss very much, and I want to see her really bad. When I get out I will do my best to stay out of here for her.

**-Lil' T, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Isn't it interesting how we are ready to change for someone we love, but not for ourselves? We hope you keep your promise to "stay out of here for her" because staying out of here is the right thing to do. Especially when you have someone on the outs you're excited about sharing time with.

## Common Sense

When I hear the words, "common sense" I can hear my mom telling me not to be stupid and to use my "common sense."

Obviously, I didn't listen to her because look where I'm at! I think if I would have used my "common sense" then I would not be writing on this topic today.

For example, say you were walking down the street and you saw a burning house...what would you do? One, look for a water hose and try to put it out? Two, just stand there in shock? Or three, call for help? Well if you're a person with "common sense," then you wouldn't just stand there like an idiot stuck on stupid, you would use "common sense" and call for help.

So basically, if you do not have "common sense" then you will probably keep coming back here and keep making the same mistakes. So if you don't have any "common sense" then you better find it because it will get you in a better place than this! Trust me...

**-Flaco, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We love to hear more about common sense in your experience, especially as it relates to the decisions you've made that has led you to being locked up. A question for you and all of the readers, what happens when common sense runs up against peer pressure, need to fit into a group, or a desire to be daring? How often does your common sense get shut out and why?

## Stories That Go On and On

Tattoo are my stop sign  
I can prove that I can get mine  
All of my ink on me reminds me  
To walk in the light and not blindly  
My tattoos are of culture and fallen family  
So please listen and try to understand me  
My tattoos have stories that go on and on  
I look at then and think of the stories before I do wrong  
My stop sign really helps me out  
Before I do wrong I think and shout  
Look at the ink and then my eyes  
The ones that killed my family I despise  
Rest in paradise to the Usos and Tamas  
When I get mad and sad I pause like a comma  
Think twice and let it go  
Stay solid until I grow old  
When I look into the ink in my body  
I sometimes feel like Gotti  
'Bout to go crazy what do I make of it  
Look at my tattoos and I know I will make it

-Sean, Solano

From The Beat: We like the wisdom you show in this piece, for example when you "get mad and sad (you) pause like a comma, think twice and let it go."

*I'd like to give a shout-out to the unit counselors Mrs. Sheppard, Mrs. Webb, and Mrs. Loudermilk.*

## Hello Beat

It's the one and only Drakester telling y'all how much I really appreciate you guys for the magazine. It's so great to see a positive magazine out on the shelf for teens of all ages. The reason I personally like The Beat is because it gives me a positive way to relieve my stress and daily emotions. And also because I read it every week and notice how many teens, probably for the first time, find something to be serious about. It makes me happy. Thanks Beat!

Also, I'd like to give a shout-out to the unit counselors Mrs. Sheppard, Mrs. Webb, and Mrs. Loudermilk.

-The Drakester, Alameda

From The Beat: Thank you! Writers like you ARE The Beat. We facilitators are honored and excited to help your words get printed and read around the country.

## The Next Ball Player

Hey Beat, this Banana and I'm not going to 850, thank God! I'm going to be in this G-thang for a min., but it's better here than 850.

Well I'm off 850 now, so what am I going to do when I get out this G-thang? I'm going to CCSF. I'm done with high school so I'm going to play ball for CCSF.

And I'm going to give back to my young black men and sisters. I want to get my masters so I can work up here at YGG.

Well, that's all I have to say. To all in all the units, keep yo' head up. Love,

-Banana, San Francisco

From The Beat: Well, congratulations on avoiding 850. It sounds to us like you're taking this as a second chance that you intend to take advantage of. Fantastic! We wish you all the luck in both your worthwhile goals — to play for the WNBA and to get your master's degree so you can help your young sisters and brothers.

## The Rebirth Of My Heart

First there was nothing  
Not even the faint echo of a song  
Loneliness was daily for me  
Until you came along  
There was a gleam of stars in your eye  
I thought I'd never feel this way again,  
But you were the one to reach into my heart  
And find in me a friend  
I could not ignore the magnetism  
That I feel when you were near  
And any problems plaguing my mind  
Would certainly disappear,  
It was the rebirth of my heart  
The day you came to life because  
I knew from the moment I held you  
I would find love again

-D, San Francisco

From The Beat: Your intense focus on Lavelle is understandable, and we hope it keeps you moving forward. Just be sure to spend some time on your own focus, so that you never find yourself in this sad situation again!

## March 2, 1992

Good girl gone bad! My life changed in a blink of my eye. A 3.0 student, athlete, very understandable, I loved school so much I always wanted to be a basketball player, lawyer and an actress.

On July 21, 2007, I had a meeting that changed my life — the first time I got separated from my twin brother I had been with for 15 whole years. I was told if I did good for eight months, we would be back together.

For eight whole months, I never missed curfew, in school did better then ever, got my best report card (3.88). I was kind of loving life till my promise was broke. I started skipping school, getting F's and running away and doing drugs.

(To be continued)

-De'Janoe, San Francisco

From The Beat: We can understand why you'd be angry and frustrated that the promise made to you turned out to be lie. But your reaction to this lie is likely to hurt yourself and nobody else! We don't know the whole story, but we believe that you have a far better chance of getting back together with your twin if you continue doing well in school and staying out of places like this! We hope your mind is back on the right track, so let us know how you're thinking now.

## From Kids to Gangstas

From candy to dope, from toy cars to skrapes  
from toy Bangas to real ones  
from plastic bullets to hollow tips.  
From young brains to young thugs  
From apple juice to purk, from lil mama's to young runnas  
from pop's ports to dro.  
from detention to suspension, from suspension to expulsion. From expulsion to the streets.  
From the streets to the hall. From school girls to street bops, from school boys to dope dealas.

Common sense would have told them  
go the other way.

-Lo, Solano

From The Beat: This is an interesting piece chronicling the shift...here you seem to say that a whole series of trouble could have been avoided with common sense. We wonder though, if sense like that is so common, why do so many still go this way? Why do you think some people don't have common sense?



## Tough Love

What's up with The Beat? You know it's ya boy Trill keeping it lit. You know it don't stop until they let me out.

But ey, ya boy pick this topic because females be doin' ya boy wrong when he come to jail. When I first got here, them letters was raining from her. But then they stop coming after a while. I'm like, "I thought she loved me."

When you were out, she will treat you like a king. But I guess she couldn't take it. That's what you call tough love. I ain't go lie, I still love her though. This just let me know not to come back to jail because, you not just hurting yourself, you hurtin' everybody that loves you.

**-Trill, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry you're feeling forgotten by your female, and we hope it's just that she's slow to write. But on the other hand, she may have decided that you really left her before she left you. (The truth is, you chose to do something that risked your freedom, which means you weren't really thinking of her at the time.) But whether this relationship works or not, you are 100% right about the fact that when you go to jail, you're hurting a whole lot of people besides yourself.

## Common Sense

Common sense? When you punch me, I'ma punch you back Common sense? When you around a bunch of nobodies, it won't be a condition

Common sense? You have contraband, you bound to get caught Common sense? You go to jail, yo' female get snatched (unless you got game like me... ha)

Common sense? You on the wrong side of town, you bound to get shredded

Common sense? Be about you, and you will make it

**-Boo Bear, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We like your list of examples of Common Sense, even though there are some very important people who might disagree with you. For example, Jesus told his followers to "turn the other cheek" if someone punches you. Apparently, he had a different definition of Common Sense.

## Solid

When you get locked up and looking at some hard time, just stay strong.

When you know your girl is pregnant and you're not going to be there for a long time, just stay strong.

When you know your family is struggling with money problems and you can't do anything about it, just keep your head up and stay strong.

Knowing that you're not going to be there for the birth of your child and most of his young years hurts you so much,

but just stay strong.

All we can do is sit and wait until that one-day when we get set free.

But when you're free, people notice that you ain't that dumb man that always gets locked up and hurts his loved ones.

They noticed that you've changed, that you do what you can to be there for the family.

The road looks hard now, but all we can do is stay strong.

It will pay off in the end.

**-Intharong, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We know that you've been thinking and writing a lot about doing hard time. We hope that you are able to work out your feelings of sadness and frustration as you share your life story with us. We commend you for taking up the responsibility of providing crucial financial support for your family at such a young age. You've had to grow up a lot faster than most people...we see that you DO have inner strength. Hopefully, you'll call this strength up to help you through your sentencing.

## Lock Up

Being locked up totally sucks. Everyone has done something in their life that would have them locked up. If you have been locked up through then you know from experience it's no place to be. It's not like being at home where you can get up whenever you want eat whatever you want and do basically whatever you want.

Here you have to get up at a certain time eat at a certain and do everything by a schedule. Sort of in a way it cool because it's programming you and getting your body set to do things at a certain time. Then again, it's not, because you have the new guys come and we have the reprogrammed all over again. Then you start acting stupid and you get punished as a unit. Then the times come when you wish you had lots of home cooked food. You start to think of your family. Even not getting mail sucks.

See the only thing that keep me going is when visit day comes. And it sucks when you look at your family and they look happy but they really ain't. Then when the staff tell you that your time is over that really hurts. Going to court and having the judge tell you come back in two weeks is the worst part. The best thing about that though is that you still get to see your family which lifts your spirits some. So nevertheless, being locked up isn't all fun and games. When you get released stay out of trouble, I know I am, when I do I'm going to be responsible.

Well that's all I got to say Beat, hope you like it.

**-Charles, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You pointed out the most important part of lockdown, which is that it makes it bittersweet to see loved ones, sweet on the one hand because there they are, showing their love and faith in you, but bitter too, because it forces you to look their pain dead in the face, and realize what you done. But like you say, for some people it really helps stay out of trouble... like you! How are you going to do that?

## Stop Sign

Yeah Man, what's good with The Beat? Yeah, man what's good with The Beat?

Shhh, my stop sign is my past 'cause I don't want to make the same mistake I been made for real. But yeah, I am not the same man yesterday that I was today, ya dig. But yeah, man, I see all type of people getting killed or go to jail, and that is also a stop sign.

**-Lil' Cali, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** If the memory of the consequences of your last mistake keep you from making the same mistake again, then being here has served its purpose. You're right, you are not the same today as you were yesterday, and you will not be the same again tomorrow. Change is a certainty in all our lives, whether we believe it is or not.

## Common Sense

Common sense to me is if you got a spark plug and you see a "labby" in a car, you gone hit. Common sense is when you hit a lick, run, and don't stop for nothing. Shake the spot. Don't stop runnin' or you go be in the halls sitting in a room with a boy.

Also, don't get mad at your crime partner if you get caught and he didn't 'cause you know you would've wanted some money if you didn't get caught. I'm not encouraging people robbing other people, I'm just saying if you got a sparky or if yo' pockets is empty, common sense will tell you what I did fo' real, straight up.

**-Bg, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Despite the criminal nature of your examples, we have to agree that all are good examples of exercising common sense. (And what would common sense tell you to do if you found someone using a "sparky" on your own car or your mother's?) We think a better example of common sense would be avoiding the things that lead you to run from the cops in the first place...

## I Wish

Me and the homie posted on the block.  
 We have some weed, some 40s, and a glock.  
 Outside, enjoying the California sun.  
 Fools come trippin', tryin' to ruin our fun.  
 They came up, said where are we from.  
 The homie said nothing, just pulled out the gun.  
 As quick as it was pulled out, the trigger released.  
 One is now deceased.  
 That day ruined more than one life.  
 Now all that homie knows is push pull struggle strive.  
 Now we are all filled with regret.  
 I wish those fools we never met.

**-B, Santa Cruz**

*From The Beat: We wish so, too. Even though we don't know if this is a work of the imagination or the story of a real event, told in a poem. That speaks to how powerful your piece is. It feels real, even if it isn't. That's one of the marks of good writing.*

## The Power Of A Smile

The power of a gun can kill  
 The power of a fire can burn  
 The power of wind can chill  
 The power of the mind can learn  
 The power of anger can rage inside until it tears you apart  
 But the power of a smile, especially yours, can heal a frozen heart  
 Just like your Daddy's... Love you Lavelle!

**-D, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We hope that this is the last time you will ever be separated from Lavelle. You both need each other!*

## Why Mom

Look at what you did to me  
 Open your eyes and what do you see  
 You see someone who has been hurt

And all you do is laugh  
 You tell me to pick a path  
 When you know I already have

So all you do is make it worse  
 You push me farther away  
 Until you got nothing else to say

Then you go away  
 As if you're trying to make me pay  
 When all you do is hurt us both

So why did you leave me  
 When all you do is hurt us both  
 Open your eyes and just look

You've hurt yourself more than me  
 Just look and see  
 You may always suffer with pain

So in the end  
 I have no one  
 So all I want to do is run

Just remember I always will remember you until I die

**-Stacks, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Poetry is a great place to put strong feelings of all kinds, whether it's love or anger or whatever. This is a really powerful poem. We're sorry you've been hurt by your mom. Keep writing, and eventually you might move past the pain.*

## You Don't Have To Cry No More

This writing isn't on a topic but it's something I wrote for my mom:  
 Momma, you don't have to cry no more,  
 You don't have to cry no more,  
 You don't have to cry no more,  
 Momma I'm really sorry for these past few years, Momma  
 I'm sorry for making you shed them tears, Momma I can't say why I do the things I do,  
 All I know is that I never meant to hurt you,  
 Momma, it eats me up every time I see you cry;  
 Now you crying a river of tears,  
 I know you want me to lead a new life,  
 but right there's a fight  
 'Cause this street life got me crazy;  
 Now you drowning in tears,  
 Knowing that my death could be near—  
 You don't have to cry no more,  
 You don't have to cry no more,  
 Momma you don't have to cry no more,  
 Momma I know you're up late at night  
 Hoping one day God'll save me,  
 You don't have to cry no more,  
 Momma there's something I want to tell you,  
 I know you heard these words before  
 But coming from my heart,  
 So I guess I'm gonna tell you,  
 You don't have to cry no more,  
 I don't know I ended up in church,  
 All I know is God took away this hurt,  
 So momma you don't have to cry no more.  
 I love you mom!

**-Toaster, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: Have you shown this beautiful poem to your mom? We know she will want to read it. If the street life has you going crazy and is responsible for the tears your mother cries for you, then what can you do to make your words come true? When you get out of here, will you go back to that life that causes so much pain? Common sense says that you should think about doing something different if you really want to turn those tears of pain into tears of pride and joy!*

## Stop Sign

What I think that keeps me from what I'm doing every time is when I see cops. They sometimes can look a little bit slow, but once you're caught, it's over. My mom also gives me looks that makes me feel hella nervous and guilty. Watching people and all other innocent people dying or getting beat up will keep me from doing what I want.

**-Goofy, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: These are all good stop signs — but only if they make you stop! Apparently, you missed one of those stop signs...*

## What Is Love

What is love? I ask myself this question a lot. Love is not a word. It's not something you make or cook in a pot. Love is the thing that makes you care about someone and want good things for them.

Love is not temporary. Love is an unconditional feeling that you can never get rid of. For those of you that haven't found someone you truly would do anything for, I feel bad for you because love will change your life and it's true. If you think of cheating, you're not in love.

**-Casper, Alameda**

*From The Beat: This is great piece. Not only because you write something really true, because you're not afraid to express your true emotions in a world where machismo is running real high. These are great words that you speak and we hope that you imply them in your daily routines. Teach your peers how to express themselves without being ashamed!*



## **Long Road Song**

He was born on 9-11, the day for hell and heaven.  
 Where I go from here now really ain't no telling.  
 An adolescent growing up, Mom and Dad struggling,  
 I didn't really do much but get into this trouble and,  
 All my life parents working day and night,  
 Just trying to get it right, trying to keep the heat and lights,  
 All dang the rents due, another day with no food.  
 Only 9 years old. What am I supposed to do?  
 Now he sees things a little different...  
 He seen his dad beat his momma in the kitchen.  
 He remembers everything like it's yesterday.  
 He gave him a kiss and walked out with nothing left to say.  
 Momma didn't really care. She said, "Forget him."  
 Now he understand. Momma, forget him.  
 Through all the years he's been so alone,  
 With barely any family and a broken home. It's so alone.

(Chorus)  
 It's been a long dayyy, it's been a long roadd.  
 And I'm waiting for my dayyyy to bloom like a rose...  
 All I want is to shine all through the night.  
 All I want is to shine all through my life.

I guess I'm just another statistic.  
 A family on welfare getting kicked out. Who the heck cares.  
 Baggage, luggage on the street corner to the bus spot.  
 Take it to the next spot. We don't know the next spot.  
 Moving out of San Jose where things felt like the same,  
 To Morgan Hill where it's just as hot.  
 I didn't really do better but got worse,  
 But deep down my heart hurts.  
 Been through so much with nothing to show for it.  
 Only got that gift of music that's stuck in my soul.  
 I heard my cry last night.  
 Damn, it's hurting me inside. Made me wanna cry.  
 I couldn't do nothing but be by her side...  
 And tell her everything's gonna be alright...  
 As long as we try to make it through the night...  
 Everything's gonna be better in a matter of time...  
 So please, dry your eye.

(Chorus continues)

**-Denny, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Denny, do you have a melody to go with these lyrics? If so, maybe you could perform this song for the group when we get together next. We'd love to hear your song performed. And we're touched by the story.*

## **I Can Think Straight**

Sittin' in this Juvenile cell,  
 Wishin' I could post bail,  
 All the judge tryna do is give a black brother hell,  
 Waiting for that mail,  
 Seems like you never gon' get out,  
 So you start actin' out,  
 The food is whack,  
 And the shhh taste like crap,  
 But that's the consequence of coming to jail  
 The only positive thing is that I'm going to  
 School and can have less distraction.  
 And I can think straight... because I'm sober.

**-Juan**

*From The Beat: It sounds like those last two lines might even make lockdown worthwhile... now that you are thinking straight, what kinds of thoughts are you having? About your life, your future, your habits?*

## **Common Sense**

Common sense? Don't spark that car, grab that lab (laptop), and sell it to the amigos for a few hundred dollars that you gone split amongst the two of you. You spark, I grab, take it to the amigos, and split the dough in half.

Just 'cause of that I'm stuck here with a roommate all 'cause my homie ain't want to listen to me when I said, "I ain't got a good feelin'."

Now, 'cause I ain't used common sense, I'm down for the count.

**-Marlon, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: This is a good example of not using common sense. But you can't really blame your friend for not listening to you. You have to blame yourself for not listening to your own inner voice!*

## **Pray To God...**

What's good Beat? You know who it be, it's ya boy Mouthpiece B from Santa Clara County.

Well I had court yesterday and I got sentenced to 120 days. I'm happy with that, I expected to get off EMP but the DA wanted to send me to the ranch for 180 days. So did the judge, but God must have heard my prayers because I got another chance. I was dodging bullet and God saved me.

I'm really relieved...so I'm just going to take it day by day until I get out. I got my mind set on what to do, school (college) and work. Nothing is going to hold me back... and that's a promise.

It took three trips to juvie, but hey, I finally woke up. I really just want to be there for my family like they have always been for me. I'm disappointed in myself for taking things for granted all the time. So, this experience really helped me clarify myself. Like I said just pray, don't be scared, God is always watching over you. But yea being in this max unit ain't cool. Can't wait to go to a lifestyles unit. I miss my mom, dad, and little sister a lot.

It's really painful waking up to white brick walls every morning. I miss all the homies, the females, haha.

Damn...I'm going to be in here for my birthday and Thanksgiving. But it's good, I'll be out before Xmas...

I miss my mom and dad's cooking. I miss kickin' it with my little sister; I miss working at my job making that paper. That's why when I get out it's all gonna change.

I can't really do anything here except workout, read books, and chop it up with roommates. I'm telling ya'll, this ain't the place to be. Doing drugs and gang banging is fun until you get caught. That's real talk playboy...just be about ya paper. Don't let haters bring you down, let them hate, that's they job, to HATE. So let them do their job. Just keep your head up and do what you do, because, it is what it is! You do what you do. I do what I do! Haha.

My counselor always tells us that it's time though. His words are real. I take it to the head because he just trying to help us keep our heads up.

Well beat, I've been writing with ya'll for a cool minute. Haha, hope ya'll don't get tired of me.

The Beat is cool though. It lets me express my feelings and just write about what's going on this crazy life of mine. But yeah, as for now, see you next week Beat! Be safe...

**-Mouthpiece B, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: That sounds like some good news and we are happy that you seem to be in good spirits. Looking forward to working and earning a living is also a great way to start your freedom off in a positive way. We hope that you will also think about the challenges that may in the future. As you look to God for your good fortunes, we hope you'll look to your own strength and good character to stand up to new obstacles.*

## My Brother's Keeper

"Me, myself, and I..." When I'm locked up in my cell, that's what I say in my mind. I was told everyone can lie to you, but the only one that can't is yourself. So what does that mean? I think it means I have watch who I put my trust in and watch the people in my circle in case they snitches.

I'm locked up, but I want to get out, shut my PO up. She lyin' out her mouth. She tryna keep me in this cage. I'm getting hella mad. I'm goin' enraged. I'm 'bout to go bad. I'm from San Francisco and that's what I rep. When I get out, I'ma get it tatted on my chest.

Herb is my friend. When I puff the herb, I can't feel my hand. I'm just kiddin'. It just puts me in a different zone. Sometimes I'm stuck 'cause I'm hella stoned. I'm hella high. You can't touch me. I'm floating in the sky like yadadmean.

**-Brandon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Well, you're really given us three separate pieces, but we've put them together into one longer piece (and we always prefer you to write one longer piece about a single topic). You wrote that you have to watch who you put your trust in. Then you write that you trust herb as your "friend." We think you should examine that connection, because sometimes, substances we think of as our friends can be just as dangerous as people we trust as our friends...

## Thicker Than water

Missing something that was a part of me and my soul when I lost that person my heart and my soul turned cold

I'm only 18 but feel 50 in this world of pain

Life seems simple but too me it is all strange missing that woman who made me think about my choices

In my projects young ninjas is lost cause it's so many voices

Thicker than water, what that is?

My flesh and blood, hoping I'll live long enough to see my kids.

It's a dead ass game living in this world and that's how I feel

Don't want to do like my bro' and live life by the steel

Only thing thicker than water runs through our veins

Rest in peace big bra sorry I lost you to the game

**-Young Mackin', Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for sharing this powerful poem with The Beat. We are proud to print it, and we hope that for you, it shines some light in the darkness of your sorrow at losing your brother.

## STANDOUTS

## SANTA CRUZ

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## Hard Decisions

One of the hardest decisions I made was getting myself in here, to juvy. The decisions I've been making are insane. People might think there's something wrong with my brain.

**-Aaron**

**From The Beat:** What do you think? We think they were just bad choices. The cure for that is to stop making them. We know you know the difference between a good decision and a bad one. So, if you don't like living in juvy, wise up.

## Decisions

The decisions I make are on me. But when it comes down to revenge, you know I'm straight locs in the brain.

**-Ruben**

**From The Beat:** Revenge is a decision, too. But it's a bad decision, one made without much thought. We urge you to slow down and think it through. Revenge is the kind of decision that could cost you your freedom.

## My Family Has Got A Hold On Me

One thing that's got a hold on me is my girl. Another is my mom. My son has the biggest hold on me. I can't let go of any of them. I want to let go of my girl, but I can't let her go. But I really want to forget about her. I can't let go of loving her and I can't let go of hating her (because of all the screwed up stuff she's pulled). But it's all good.

I'm gonna be out one day. Meanwhile, I'll stay calm, cool, and collected.

**-Shane**

**From The Beat:** Love is complicated. We want it to be simple. And sometimes it is. But when it's not simple, it can be very frustrating. Welcome to the world. That's the way it is. And it's still the best of all the alternatives. You're a bright guy with a big heart. Let go of the anger, be grateful for the love, and use the down time wisely. Words, more words in the bank of your brain. That's what you need to focus on.

## Fog

I walked outside and the fog cleared up.

It was so clear that I saw an owl in a tree.

But as I was looking at it, the darkness took it away.

**-Jose**

**From The Beat:** This is a fine poem. Perhaps one of the things it suggests is that all things change.

## Racial Segregation In Prisons

I don't think prisons should be racially segregated. They should be segregated by beliefs, so there would be no problems. They shouldn't put Mexicans with Mexicans, 'cause one of them may be from the south, and the other from the north.

**-Hector**

**From The Beat:** We've never heard that one before - segregating people by their beliefs. We understand what you're saying, but where do you draw the line? Should there be a section for prisoners who believe in the Tooth Fairy, and another section reserved for those who don't believe in Santa Claus?

## The Judge Got A Hold On Me

Well, everything's got a hold on me - especially the judge. He has a hold on my freedom. I've been locked up for fifteen months and he still won't let me go. I'll turn eighteen next month. The worst part is that I still have to put in three more months after I turn eighteen. The juvenile justice system of California robbed me of my childhood - from sixteen to eighteen. But I will be out one day. They can't keep me here forever.

**-Clyde**

**From The Beat:** Clyde, we don't know what you did that resulted in your incarceration, but surely, you've played some role in the process that led you to juvy. Owning up to your own errors and shortcomings is a pretty good place to start when looking for mercy and forgiveness from others. Give the idea some thought.



## Ain't It Fun?

Ain't it fun  
When you know  
That you're gonna die young?  
Such fun  
Ain't it fun  
When your friends despise  
What you've become?  
It's such fun

Sounding like you know everything is much easier  
Than realizing no one knows anything  
Knowledge is weakness  
Because knowledge is a foolish assumption  
Society is manmade  
As are morals and values  
We are animals and nothing more  
Yet we act as though we are something more  
The Bible is a fairy tale  
As with the Koran, the Torah, etc.  
All that exists is fear  
Fear and survival

Hometown dramas  
All I got to look forward to  
Oh, yeah  
And an ankle bracelet for two months  
I need a smoke

-Andre

**From The Beat:** Good poem! You sound like you're going through some really painful angst. If you seriously think you're doomed to die young, why don't you do everything in your power to stop whatever or whoever is threatening you, maybe including doing whatever brought you into juvy? Regardless of how your friends regard you, how do you like who you've become? Humans are animals, you're right, and we devise ways to help, teach our young, and protect each other, just like all animals do.

## Kwik Kite

What's good, Beat? This Kool-Aid once again. I'm glad I'm here to write to The Beat, but I'm not glad to be in this facility. I really don't got nothing to say, but I get out on 8/30/08, so I'm almost out. But all you kids who miss yo' mama and be crying at night, just keep you heads up and eventually you'll get out. And if you can't do the time, don't do the crime, because being in these places will break you down mentally. So while you still young, get yo' stuff on track and get off probation, do the school thing, and yo' life will be much easier. 'Til next time, Beat, don't sleep.

-Kool Aid

**From The Beat:** By now you're home. Congratulations. You have a beautiful heart for the young, who are scared and lonely in juvy. How did you manage to keep your mind cool while you were inside? We hope you're already back in school, off probation, and living a safe and happy life.

## Inup Living In The 'Hood

Living in the 'hood is cool. People think blacks are bad. People look at me and think I am bad, yet I be in the 'hood, shhh will be good. You get to love the life, feel good in life, so boys looking at two to three (years), thinking like it bad, but when you get out, you will be cool.

-D-Rock

**From The Beat:** It's understandable that you love the life of your neighborhood, but are you also curious about the outside world? What adventures you can have there? How it can challenge you? What it can offer you? Maybe some day the whole world can be your neighborhood, where you feel welcome, loved and can flourish.

## Don't Do The Crime If You Can't Do The Time

What's up with you, Beat? I've been reading The Beat a lot lately in my room and I've been noticing a lot of people sayin', "I can't take this place any more," and "I'm goin' crazy in my room." When you out there in the outs, doin' dirt and doin' whatever you do, you better get ready to come here, because you will get caught eventually. I did somethin' stupid myself, and I got sentenced to four months, but I'm gonna do my time and not let it do me, and take my sentence like a man.

For all you people who hate it in the halls and never wanna come here, I suggest you stop doin' the stupid in the outs, 'cause you will get caught eventually. And for all you people who wanna continue doin' dirt and shhh 'cause that's just what you do, then expect to get locked up and do your time like a man. Aite, that's about it for me. Stay up, everybody.

-T

**From The Beat:** Good advice. Sometimes something happens to young people—they swear every day they're in juvy that they'll never return, no matter what, but they forget all about how they hate juvy and go a little nuts as soon as they're free. What will you do when you're out, to make sure you keep your precious liberty?

## Nobody Wants To Be Here

Nobody wants to be here. It's chill if we get out soon, but if you're locked up for hella long, it sucks. We miss a bunch of stuff when we're in here. We wanna get out, but we don't control that. It's not good, but it's not bad.

-Jp

**From The Beat:** You don't control how long you're in juvy, but you hugely control whether or not you mess up, get yourself arrested and sent to juvy. What would your summer have been like had you been home? Would you be less likely to ever return to juvy had juvy been harder, as it is, or easier to bear?

## So Far Away From Me

The girl I love, the girl I feel for and care for is so far away from me that I can't stand it. Sometimes I just feel like pulling something so I don't think about it, but I just can't, 'cause the love I have for her will never end.

-Chucky

**From The Beat:** You're right, "pulling something" never solves anything. Getting arrested and sent to juvy can be devastating to a relationship, especially because there's not too much you can do to heal it from inside. Can you call or write her, to calm her and keep her close until you get out?

## Public Execution

I think you should be able to watch somebody get killed if you want to, if they killed somebody you know or if it's family. Not all public, like anybody, but kinda. I don't want to think about it.

-Skrill

**From The Beat:** If somebody you love were killed, would you want to go to the murderer's execution? If one of your homies killed someone, would you go to his public death? This really is painful to think about. Thank you for your opinion.

## Saved

I'm scared. I'm afraid of having everyone in the county know who I am. I was charged as an adult when I first got arrested, and I made national television, CNN, as well as the front page of my county's newspaper. I'm scared.

-Riot

**From The Beat:** By now your charges have been reduced and, at sixteen, you're being tried as a juvenile, so that's all good. It's not illegal for the media to broadcast your name, but it is illegal for the authorities to release your name to anyone, including the media. By now you're not as scared as you were when you wrote this, but you still have gone through a lot of humiliation, and our hearts are with you.

## Life Outside

Life outside of here is going on no matter what. People are doing the same things while I'm up in here. My patnas are living their life, and doing whatever they want while I'm locked up. I mean, I think about this every day because I get letters and everything but they don't really tell me everything that's going on.

I'm tripping 'cause I should be out there doing my thang. Females lie so you don't know really what's going on. But anyways when I get out I'ma live my life and do my thang, go find that solid female on the real. But while I'm in here I gotta not trip and get the lil' info I can from my patnas. That's life from the inside to the outside.

**-Lil' Drew**

**From The Beat:** You're right, while you're locked up the world you've lived in the outs still goes on without you. Can you use this time as a way to get perspective on the life your living? For some reason you were given a break, a pause to think. And by the way from our experience, men lie too. What do you base your trust on?

## What Is Hate

What is hate? Hate is a feeling that makes you kill and end up in here. Hate will transform you and turn you into a different person, and can hurt the people around you and those that care for you.

**-Casper**

**From The Beat:** And it can also hurt the most important person, and that is YOU. Yes it will hurt all your loved ones, including someone else's loved ones, but in the end it will affect you also. Why do you think people have so much hate? Why is it easier to hate than to love?

## Turf Dancing

Yeah I have a thing I do. I like to do something called turf dancing and it gets my mind off of doing bad things. And my principle to fighting is I only fight if they run up or it has to be a good reason.

I really got into turf dancing when I saw giggin' aka turf dancing. I was listening to get on my hype in the parking lot.

**-Lil' Pm**

**From The Beat:** Anything that you can do to vent out your frustrations besides violence, we'll approve of it. How does "Turf Dancing" work for you? Do any of your friends do it? We think that's a great idea to look for other ways to vent out your frustrations. If you can do that then you can definitely stay out of trouble.

## Execution

Execution should be right and wrong, like murder, there should be a death penalty for that 'cause taking the next person's life is hurting a lot of people. So it should be a consequence. I know two wrongs don't make a right, but it's not fair to people who should die not a natural death, 'cause the person you killed didn't die naturally, so you should die too, not in front of public though.

That's not right, you shouldn't do that. It should be against the law to do that to anybody on earth, and people who come see, that it's not fair. That encourages the people to do it. If it were me, I wouldn't do it. If somebody killed somebody I wouldn't plea to have the death penalty on them. Me personally I'd handle it with me and my goonz. So there should be a death penalty if the family wants it.

**-Baby Joker**

**From The Beat:** Ghandi said "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind," similar to your "two wrongs don't make a right." Another man we know, when he thought about how he could avenge his brother's death, realized that no number of people would do it. In other words he felt that if one was killed he wouldn't be satisfied, nor would he if twenty were. No killing would help, he realized. Only peace.

## A Sick Day

I don't have a stop sign because what I do, I do, and when I do it, I do it. But what would stop me is police always slowing a ninja down. But shhh, when I get out I am going to bounce back even harder but a little bit smarter.

**-James**

**From The Beat:** Here's the thing - the police will always have the law on their side, so they will always be one step ahead of you. You can keep up with the law for a short while, but you can't escape it. If you keep doing illegal stuff, you will keep getting caught. You may not always get caught for everything, but you will, without a doubt, end up back in jail eventually, time and time again. You can't escape the law - life just doesn't work that way.

## Why I Will Change

Some call it strange

But inside I remain the same

In the beginning I never wanted my life to be this way

But that day when I was put in handcuffs and sent away

When I arrived here it was hard

But as the days went by

I wanted to cry

I thought I would die behind the door

Not wanting to be here anymore

So that's why when I get out

The feeling of freedom will be overwhelming

I can finally see my friends and family.

**-Stancey, Wilie, Gerry**

**From The Beat:** You say you remain the same inside. How will you change? You haven't told us. Your behavior? We feel your pain. But what exactly are you going to do so you won't find yourself in this situation again?

## What's Beef

What's beef?

Beef is when another ninja try to tell you can't eat

Beef is when you gotta stay on point wit the heat

Beef is when you gotta worry about them ninjas on the creep

Beef is when it's the middle of the night and you can't sleep

Beef is when you can't walk around in the street

Beef is when you kill a ninja on site when ya'll meet.

What inspired me to write this piece was I'm just tired of fake ninjas who supposed to be funk' befriending their enemies. If you going to funk be serious about it.

**-Greg**

**From The Beat:** Maybe they're befriending their enemies because they're tired of all the senseless killings. You have young people 13-17 years old dying in the streets everyday, for practically no reason. Over some stupid shhh. Over some block that doesn't belong to anyone. Maybe those guys are tired of all the violence also. Think about it-the funk in the streets happens because of you guys, and it's up to y'all to stop it.

## What I Plan To Do When I Get Out

First I plan to buy me a slurpy and a slice of pizza with some mushrooms and meat on it. Then I go see both of my girlfriends, go see my friends and celebrate with them about me getting out of jail. And then get a first night's sleep in an actual house in a long time.

I then plan to get a job and go back to school, get good grades, and graduate. Then go to a cooking college/culinary school and never come back to this hellish place ever again!

**-Never Come Back**

**From The Beat:** Do it! Please Do it! You have all these great goals! Stay determined and don't let anything stop you from accomplishing your goals. We hope to never see you again after you leave! Good luck!



## We Did Not Ask For This

The streets where all you can do is try to survive.

Every day I walk out the door bullets drip like a baby drinking milk. A ninja can't do shhh but burst back. It's crazy because all you can do is survive by fighting back ...we did not ask for all this ...we were just born on this earth. So we survive by fighting, shooting, and just mobbing.

Mobbing is the term used for when like your just doing bad things but people respect you for so a lot of people may know you as a mobber, so all you ninjas that's trying to survive .you better mob -- and fast.

**-Baby Whoday**

*From The Beat: We can feel the anger and frustration, like you say, you didn't ask to be born into this violent world. But we can't choose what we are born into, we can only choose how we handle it. You say that all you can do is survive by fighting back... but doesn't every gun in the mix add to the violence and the death? Is there another way to fight back, nonviolently?*

## Stop Sign

I really don't have a stop sign in my life. But ever since I lost one of my close patnas I wish he had a stop sign in his life.

He was older than me, he was like 28 and I was 16. I met him by my sister's house. He was out there selling his dope and I used to just be out there playing football with one of my patnas until he asked me did I want to hit his weed one day, and I said yeah. So he told me to hop in and he fired the herbs up.

We was just sitting in the car getting higher than high, then ever since that day we been cool. He treated me like a lil' brother or something. He taught me a lot. The most valuable thing he told me was never to be a follower, be a leader and stay in school.

I wish he was here today but he's locked up and he's looking at a couple of years but I can't wait to see my ninja Al. Free Al Finest!!!

**-Stone City**

*From The Beat: Sounds like this friend of yours gave you some good advice. Unfortunately from where both he and you are right now, neither of you seems to be following these words of wisdom. Seems like he's had an effect on you, since you remember what he's said. We hope you can now take those words and turn them into action.*

## Trust

I wanna talk to you about trust, and who you can and can't trust, the person you should and shouldn't trust. I trust my family because they were there the first day I was born. They show me a lot of things that I never seen and took me to places I never been. They taught me what's right from wrong and learn to respect others.

Friends are the ones that I don't really trust, cause they would try to make you do stuff that you shouldn't do. Like, for example, stealing cars and robbing people. And if they get caught, they probably would rat you out.

That's why I do things solo or with my brothers. And nowadays, friends be acting hella different and shhh. When I was out, they were cool and we be just chillin. But when I take a fall, these ninjas acting like they don't even know me no more. So that's why I don't trust none of them no more.

**-Moeun**

*From The Beat: Seems you feel like you can't trust friends because the ones you've had betrayed you. Not all friends are like that. If the people you were hangin' with were pressuring you and not supporting you, they're definitely not friends worth keeping around. The trick is to find friends who listen to you and support you, just like family does. These are the friends to look for.*

## RIP and FREE list

**-RIP/Free List**

*From The Beat: After giving this a lot of thought, and again, we don't mean to disrespect but if you're gonna do an RIP list you can't just give shout outs. You have to contribute a little bit information on all your homies that passed away. The reason we can't do it is because some knuckleheads took advantage of the situation. So now when you want to do an RIP Shout out feel free to write a couple comments about your loved ones.*

## When I Get Out

When I am out of "The Hall" I want to go into Military Arms Designing after college. My goal in the designing branch of the military is to improve the .50 cal Barret Sniper rifle or become an environmentalist to filter stuff out of the air.

It's pretty much hippy stuff if you look at it one way. Good on the other. When I get out I am going to make a difference! My family and friends are sad but when I get out...man I can't even explain.

**-Wylz**

*From The Beat: We can't explain it either! We're glad that you have set long-term goals. Goals are what keep people motivated and it might help you stay out of trouble. Good luck on your conquest and just stay focused and don't lose sight of what you're trying to accomplish.*

## Common Sense

I think common sense is about being smart and making smart decisions, like knowing when you're not supposed to be and where you're supposed to be. I learned this lesson the hard way when I was in my potna's in a Monte Carlo after we were done chilling and cruising around talking to the ladies.

After I left from my potna's car I had a gram of weed on me and the 50 came rolling through, pulled over, searched me, took my weed, and gave me a \$250 fine. Then they called my mom and told her where I was. I was pissed. The next day she told my P.O. and she put me on intensive probation. That was the lesson I learned on common sense.

**-Ryan**

*From The Beat: It's common sense when it comes to following the laws. We all know what's illegal and legal. We make choices whether they be good or bad. The only thing we can do is learn from the mistakes we make. It's common sense that we learn from them. If you don't learn from them then you're just plain being hard headed.*

## In My Head

I have my own personal "stop sign" in my head that makes me think before I do something wrong. My mother gives me mean looks that tell me to stop doing what I'm doing before she says something. I usually stop before she tells me to stop.

**-Usually Stop**

*From The Beat: That's great that you have your own "stop sign." We're glad you're applying it so you can try to stay out of trouble. Keep that up so you won't find yourself back here in anymore! Good luck!*

## Step Up

Step up to the game  
Step up to the fam,  
Stand up to the ninja with the gun  
Step up to responsibility  
Step up to the streets  
Step up to yo' mom and help her get on her feet.

**-Baby Whoday**

*From The Beat: It's not just about who you stand up to, but what you stand up FOR. What are the things you believe in standing up for?*

## One New Day

Tie in here really just trickles on  
All you want is time to speed up  
You really don't have anything to kill the time  
But all you really want is something new

We're all ready for another new day  
And hopefully that new day will be something good  
Maybe that new day gives you a new view of life  
Hopefully tomorrow that day is coming  
Hopefully that day is tomorrow

That one new day is somewhere out there  
That one day is a part of all of our futures  
One new day could be all we need  
One new day is coming for all we need  
One new day is coming for all of us  
Just give us that one new day

**-Sunshine Dylan**

**From The Beat:** No matter where you are - even if it's behind the system's white walls - each day is new, each day is a second chance for us. We can't change what the day brings to us, but we CAN change what we bring to the day. Positivity or negativity, hope or despair. Do you feel like the attitude you bring to the day affects how it turns out?

## Fake People

Fake people is when somebody tells them to see me  
But they want to get off for them to react  
Fake people talk real loud so the staff could protect them  
But catch 'em alone  
They act lost  
Fake people lie about what guns they have on the outs like 40 cal  
I look at them and just say wow  
Fake people try so hard to fit in  
But it won't work at the end  
Cause we use you as a friend  
Moral of the story, just keep it true and real.

**-Lil' Charlie**

**From The Beat:** Fake people get on our nerves also. Like fake friends, politicians- fake people in general. But you can't be going around worrying about all the fake people. You have to worry about yourself and what you're doing in life. Concentrate on your life because those other people ain't doing nothing but distracting you from reaching your goals.

## You Can't Make A Car With No Wheels Roll

Common sense will tell you a lot, such as you have to put your feet on the pedals and push down to move the bike, or you could just sit with your feet on the pedals and act like you're moving, making motor noises but ain't going nowhere. But that's not using common sense, like taking a doo doo and not wiping your derriere.

Common sense will tell you that you can't put your sweater on your arms by putting your legs through the slots. Common sense will tell you that you can't write on a piece of paper with an unsharpened pencil or a pen with no ink. Common sense will tell you that you can't make a car with no wheels roll.

Common sense is not walking around the block thinking you're leaving your neighborhood. Common sense is the exact opposite of all of that. Smarts are just one level above that.

**-Real Mackin'**

**From The Beat:** You give us some great examples of common sense in our day to day lives. Where was your common sense when you got caught up?

## Cruisin' Down The Street In My Lexo

I'm chilling in my ride cruising up in my Lex ...

**-Baby Joker**

**From The Beat:** It (was) a very comical poem (before we edited—because we don't think the system would think it funny and we don't want you to incriminate yourself.) All that "I'm the hardest" talk ain't gonna get you no where. Do you like being incarcerated? Do you like county food? Wouldn't you rather be eating a delicious meal, sleeping in your own bed and doing whatever you want to do? You got to be responsible for your own actions, and start making things happen for yourself in a positive way.

## Think Before You Do

When I hear the word common sense, I understand the definition as logic. I think common sense is different from intelligence. No, common sense is more like doing something that you're told not to do and finding out for yourself is stubborn. Now common sense is, don't jump off the roof, and for example, intelligence is to use a ladder.

Common sense is think before you do or if you don't be sorry for spilled milk. Smarts is what you learn or study. Common sense is something you already know. For example:

Don't walk barefoot on the street

Don't go without an umbrella if it's raining

Don't drive with your car door open at 55 miles per hour

Smarts  
Go to class, study your times table sheet and learn your multiplication

Do research on Martin Luther King and learn why he was important.

Learn biology so you can know the human body.

**-Keith**

**From The Beat:** You give us a really solid definition with some examples to back it up. The essence of what you're saying seems to be that common sense is having an idea of how the world works, how it affects you. Intelligence is maybe having an idea of how you can work with the world, to your advantage. Great insight!

## My Girl Calms Me Down

I miss my girl. She is the one and only person in my life that I trust. She is beautiful, and she's the only person that can calm me down sometimes and put things into perspective. Besides my cousins she is the only person that I got in my life who I can be myself around and relax.

**-C**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you have a girlfriend who speaks to the best part of yourself. That's a good thing to have, especially when there are so many elements out there that would speak to the worst parts. Where and how did you meet?

## Common Sense Means Thinking Before You Do Something

Common sense is something you're born with and something you could be taught by your parents. I don't know how you could teach it but it got to be a person that has some smarts, and willing to learn how to think before he does stuff.

Like when I slapped a dude cause he was talking mess and I didn't think before I did it.

**-Rob**

**From The Beat:** Do you think a person can learn common sense by learning from his mistakes? Like, now that you learned that it's better to think first, then act, do you feel like you learned a lesson in common sense?



## Some Bullshhh

I'm mad as hell laying on a mat two inches thick, ninjas funk in through the vents hella beefin and shhh, man! I ain't tryna be up in jail. I'd holla at the system, tell it to lower my bail. I got an album coming out, I can't be locked in this cage. Some say I'll be rockin the stage, other's tryna say he's got my back, lying and hating on me tryna send me back. Lucky I got good cash and I got a good heart, 'cause I'm 'bout to be back on the street like a brand new car. 'Cause I don't buck, it don't feel like I'm stuck. You see the man with the cuffs, that ninja's through and still he ready to bust. He'll send you to the hospital then county jail, you gotta stay low key 'cause I ain't goin to jail.

-Chris

**From The Beat:** You're writing is really starting to improve Chris, we hope it just keeps growing. You've got a good mind for rhymes and some good raw emotion that comes through. We do ask though that you try to edit your stuff a little more with some of the language, so we don't have to change your work at all!

## God Help Me Learn

"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the son of man, be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven. After you have suffered for a little while, the god of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

For every minute you are angry you lost sixty seconds of happiness. Lord it really hurts when I'm knocked down by difficulties in life. Thank you for always being with me and helping me over each hurdle. Please give me strength and helping to learn the lessons you want to, and teach me in the hard times.

-Toaster

**From The Beat:** We printed the whole prayer because we could tell it really helps you keep your strength up in here. What kinds of lessons do you think you need to learn, what are you learning from your hard times? Tell us more!

## Real Food

I want some real food.  
Because the food in the hall sucks  
I can't wait until I go to camp  
So my mom can bring me some real food  
I hate the food in juvenile hall  
And the worst part about it  
The food is not even real food  
I hate the food  
They need to give us some real food

-Jay

**From The Beat:** We couldn't agree more. We wish the system served better food. On the other hand, we'd say this: Really taste each bite as it goes down, so that you remember the bitter taste of system life... hopefully that will motivate you to stay out, so you can eat good food!

## Football

Football is a mental and physical sport. You have to use speed and mental alertness. I want to be a football player.

-Devante Luke

**From The Beat:** Do you work out while you're in the Hall? Do you read a lot about football and about careers that are related to sports (Sportswriters, for example, are some of the best journalists around), like working as an agent, or coaching?

## Your Stop Sign

Something in me tells me not to kill, and something in me tells me to fight. Something in me wanna pull da trigga, and gas everybody who betrayed me. But something in me is stopping me from doing it.

My stop sign was nowhere to be found when the tinted window slowly pulled down. My stop sign comes and goes, so I don't know when to stop. I just hope one day I don't make a big mistake and get my ass shot.

-Gerardo

**From The Beat:** That stop sign you're writing about, that's your conscience. It's telling you not to do things you know aren't right. Seems like something else in you can beat out your conscience - maybe it's feelings of revenge, hatred, or pride, or maybe it's something else. If you can figure out what takes over your conscience, maybe you can learn how to control it better.

## Ten Years

I see myself in ten years in my own house.

I see myself making a successful life in college.

I will try to make it to the NBA on TV.

I'm going to study in college to be an accountant to work for a bank -- or own a bank.

-Cj

**From The Beat:** These are all powerful goals, you will be proud of yourself as you achieve them one by one. But what will you need to do, say, over the next six months, as you move step by step to achieving these goals?

## Life

A day in life may bring a lot of things, some good, some bad. You will also make choices That may better your situation or may not. But if you aren't trying to help my situation don't judge me. If you don't do anything for me, I'm not saying that anybody owe me anything. I'm just saying I don't care what anybody thinks or how anybody feels. My baby will eat by any means necessary... as long as you don't get in the way of my baby eating you won't hear from me.

I am who I am I don't care what you think make the wrong choice and judge me you bet not blink.

-DaShawn

**From The Beat:** See this is the whole problem: Of course your baby has to eat. But your baby also needs YOU - alive, free, and right there, as a father. Which means that you have to make sure you don't do anything that might make the system or a bullet take you away from your baby! Can you do that? Out of love for family?

## I Feel You

If you had to bust up gun to defend yo' block

I feel you

If you just took ten for a case you ain't win

I feel you

If you was out there puttin' in work, doin' yo' dirt, bangin' yo' turf

I feel you

If you took a couple shots for the team

I feel you

If you had to rob and kill just to get y'o dough, sippin' on hella bo',

and smoking on hella dro'

I feel you

If you in the hall facin' twenty-nine

I feel you

-Purple Baby

**From The Beat:** It takes a person who's had hard times to understand how tough hard times can be. This poem shows how you get deeper each week, with poems that anyone who has suffered through the system or the streets will be able to relate to. Peace.

## My Stop Sign

My stop sign: is my family sometimes. When I'm bout to do something I think of my lil' brothers and sisters, how it will affect them without their older brother in their life. Sometimes I don't think and I'll regret it later when I'm behind these Juvie walls.

It's not fun waking up when they tell you to and eating when they tell you to, go to school and sleep when they tell you to. Sometimes you go to court and you think you're going to get out and you don't. This is how I live. I wish I could take it all back, too late.

**-Lamont AKA Mountain**

**From The Beat:** You don't have to keep wishing to take it all back. You made a mistake, just like anyone. We all make mistakes and later regret some of the decisions we make. You have the power to stop making those mistakes. Do your time, and next time when you're out—Stop and Think and you won't find yourself back here making wishes and regretting decisions you made.

## Who Do I Trust

Who do I trust...no body  
I trust nobody at all. Nobody.  
Forget trust.

**-Chicken Little**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for your honesty. It must be hard to be so alone out there. Here's a question. Do you trust yourself? Meaning, do you feel like you make the decisions that in the long run will keep you happy?

## Love

Love is kind,  
Love does not envy,  
It appreciates itself,  
I is proud for what it stands for,  
Love is not weak, but strong with enormous power.  
Love is trustworthy,  
Love is NOT a word o be used in fiction.  
Love is crazy.  
Love is fun.  
Love is exciting.  
Love is unpredictable.  
Love can sometimes terrify you.  
Love is to accept,  
Not to be visualized as a mirage.  
Love does not rejoice in inequality, but  
Rejoices within the truth  
Most of all; Love involves respect...100% of it!

It took a lot of experiences to finally understand what love really means. Before, my fiancé used to ask me if I knew what the true meaning of love was and to explain it to her. I used to tell her... "Love is indescribable babe. Everyone knows that!" When really love is nothing but mixed emotions you feel for the next person and could be broken down into smaller portions. For instance respect, care, intimacy, and most of all, honesty. With that being said I would like to that the person who has finally opened my eyes to "true love" and its official meaning...

Thank you Chanel for being my amor (my love). I appreciate you for who you are. And I promise never to forget you "IF!" we ever part.

I love you,  
Your fiancé

**-Camarr**

**From The Beat:** We would add one thing to these beautiful thoughts on love, which is that in order to love another person, you must love yourself. You must treat yourself with dignity and respect, AND you must make decisions knowing they will affect both of you.

## Me And My Mother

Me and my...humph...let me tell you about me and my mom.

My mom and me have our good days and our bad days... mostly bad. We both take part in that. I'll do something wrong, like forget to do the dishes or tell my mom what she need to do, and she will do something wrong like forget to get my pills or holler at me about something about something my brother did.

Don't get me wrong I love her to death but she gets on my nerves. I wish she would jus see things my way. Me my brother and sister get along fine when she's not home but when she home my sister steps up and tries to take control. But we do have fun times too, like when we play rock band together and sing and all that. I love my mom.

**-Lil' Bugaboo**

**From The Beat:** Moms and daughters always go through phases where they fight, but then on the other hand like you say, the love there is so powerful too. Are you going to be living with her again soon?

## Hella Mad

What's good Beat? I went to court today and they are sending me to ROP for a year and a half. I'm hella mad at that shhh 'cause I don't think the judge like me, you feel me. But I was thinking of runnin' but I'm not 'cause two of my cousins is goin,g so I'll stay strong.

**-Lil' Dj**

**From The Beat:** We hope you don't run, because the more you run, the harder it is to stay out of the system. So yeah, stay strong, and write to The Beat from ROP! By the way, when are you going to take responsibility for what brought you to the hall!? It wasn't the judge!

## To The Wise

Why do I keep doing the same negative things over and over and expect a different reaction?

**-Take This!**

**From The Beat:** What a great question. We just might make it a Beat topic! Have you got an answer?

## What I Learned From The Letter

I got a letter from my homie and he got me thinking. He told me that the hood ain't the same no more.

I was in my cell thinking... he had told me it's the truth: The hood changed and now I'm in the hall. Homies don't ride no more to protect the hood. They let enemies post it in the block.

That got me thinking, I put my life for that varrio and the homies are messing it up letting them kick it there. I see it like they saying that my life it ain't worth it... you feel me?

But my homie and cousin that got jumped in with me, they told me that the hood changed and that they going to get away from the hood for a while. But they told me that I should get away too, because we let ourselves get recognized by a lot of enemies too soon, and that I should just lay low and go to school and strive in my life and be somebody.

Well to all keep your heads up... we will be out sooner or later.

**-Arabe**

**From The Beat:** It's funny that they told you to "be somebody" because as far as we are concerned you already are somebody: A loving son, a caring boyfriend, a deep thinker, a loyal writer. Maybe it's time to make it a bigger fight - not just about fighting against your so-called 'enemies' but about fighting to make things better for your people. So the hood can be safe for children, so other immigrants don't have to be so afraid of deportation, so that latinos stop killing latinos. One way or another, we agree with that letter: Strive!



## Sick of Group Homes

Damn!! I'm still locked up. It's only been almost three months. I go to court tomorrow they about to send me to a group home in San Jose it's a level fourteen. But I ain't trippin'. I'm gonna cut anyway.

I just can't mess wit' these group homes no more. I've been in and out of group homes since I was 11 years old and I'm sick of the BS. So I'm gonna go on the run until some time next year turn myself in do that little six months, then get out straight release. And if I go to Rita I go to Rita, hey, but whatever go down it go down.

Hope things go cool in court.

**-Young Runner**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry you've had to deal with so many placements, especially from a young age... but we also really hope you don't end up on the run. Too much drama hits people when they're on the run, and we'd rather know that you are safe and in school and getting what you need so that one day you can be independent.

## My Stop Sign is Jail

My stop sign is coming jail. I have a plan that I'm supposed to look out for, and being in jail is not helping. I was having money on the outs and was doing real well.

I'm trying to get my life right and get a job, and a G.E.D. camp Sweeney is going to help me get through the struggles. I hope everyone learn something from they mistakes. Because I did.

**-Lil' Tone**

**From The Beat:** What is the number one mistake you are sure you will never repeat? Share the knowledge!

## Goin' Home

What's up wit' it Beat? It's Lil Jon Jon  
I'm about to get out 'cause I'm sick of doin' time  
'Bout to go home and just open the blinds  
I'm gonna watch football, I don't need no blunt  
I'm gonna sit on the couch and just house stunt  
I can't leave the house so what it don't matter  
Give me a few months you can taste my bladder  
Yeah I might be mad but I'm still gettin' out  
While ninja's sittin' in the room with a stanky potty mouth

**-Lil' Jon Jon**

**From The Beat:** Keep us posted on home sup' and let us know how it's going.

## Tick Tock

Tick tock then it stop yo' time is over  
I hope you ninjas thinking straight I hope you ninjas sober

'Cause I'm about to try my luck and I got my clovers  
So what the use of hauling a range without the rover  
Yeah it's okay I know you girl chose up  
But it ain't never be pimps down and those up  
It's you getting money until you mess around and blow up

Yeah I'm in my teens but I'm still about to fo' up  
I'm like a school binder all I need is paper  
And this ain't them slave days we don't need no labor  
I'm goin get money until it's gone and vacation later  
So if you lay with my paper you going get taper

**-Bill "mutha" Gates**

**From The Beat:** The rhymes keep coming like rain in the tropic/even when you don't even mess with our topic/it's too much wealth inside your mind/to let the system keep you behind/get your money legit, from school and jobs/then come back and teach the youth how success REALLY mobs

## Is It The Watch On My Wrist?

What's up Beat, this is yo' boy Lil' Man from Oakland,  
And this is about my watch on my wrist:

She kissin' my face,  
She thinks I'm the shhh, is it the chain on my neck or the watch on my wrist?

Maybe the ice on my ear or the bracelet but she look like the type that make it fit (uhhh) Young Lil' Man don't kiss me baby you can kiss my chains

You gotta be a dime piece  
just to look at the rocks on my time piece

I come through in a drop top Jag,  
An old school Chevy with the UK tags, my pockets so heavy that I can't walk steady,

You boys got the ice we don't already got a big thang but ain't from the hood I ride with. A boy like me ain't pretty, I'm so snowed up

Lil' boy want to be like me when they grow up (uh)

**-Lil' Man**

**From The Beat:** We had to do some cutting here and there on your piece - you know why. But the rhymes are excellent. Isn't it messed up how money doesn't talk, it screams. It screams so loud that you can't even know if a girl likes you for you or for your money. It screams so loud that it's louder than mama's voices telling their children to be safe... It screams so loud it makes a little boy look up to a teenager, just because he's got some jewelry!

## Execution in the Hood

I think it would be kind of funny to see execution in the hood. But at the same time, think about your family and friends. That would make it not funny or cool so I wouldn't want it to happen to family friends. That's how I feel.

**-Lil' Six**

**From The Beat:** It's good thinking what you say... maybe we should always imagine our family and friends in a situation when we're trying to decide how we feel about something political, like entering a war, changing a rule about jails, closing schools, etc.

## Legacy

When I die I wanna leave  
Behind a legacy  
Mama begging me  
To be something with my life  
I just pray to Jesus Christ  
That he don't take my life beforehand  
I wanna grow to be the best  
Man I can,  
But I gotta have a plan  
And I know plans fail that's while I'm in jail  
But with a little wisdom  
I can succeed

**-Baby Weezy**

**From The Beat:** You can succeed - and plans don't always fail, not if you they're solid ones, and if you follow them! First tell us this, what are your dreams and goals?

## Life Of Twin

What's up Beat this yo boy Twin. You know I've been here for about two months and I am going to be back at home doing my thang like before I came to jail. I love my brother and my family too I love my Baby mama and my baby.

**-Twin**

**From The Beat:** We hope that this love helps you keep up your strength so you can do what you want and move forward in life. When did you have your baby? What's it like knowing you are a father?

## Things Happen

What's up with it Beat? Damn, I've been locked up for months now, and I got five more to go. I hate this shhh. Damn I won't be free till 2009. That's hell long.

It's been hard for me. I'm at camp and I don't get to go home on the weekends. So I'll be doing my program without going on no home passes. But I ain't 'bout to run though. Because if I run I'm going to get caught and I'm going to come back, or I might go somewhere else.

So I choose to get my time over with sooner then later. Since I've been here I had two friends that passed away. Well since I've been here a lot of shhh happen.

Well Beat enough said for now, so I'm end it like this: RIP to the fallen.

**-Lil' Rikki**

*From The Beat: We hope you take a good long look in the mirror soon, and congratulate the young man you see in the reflection, for all the ways he is holding up under stress. We know it's hard, but so far you have handled it all with great strength. Keep your head up!*

## Who's the Joke?

It's natural like weather.

It comes like the wind.

But if you don't use it you can get lost like a kid.

Should I do this or should I do that?

Stuck in a can flick what you know about that?

But it sense, now whose the joke?

**-Cash Daddy**

*From The Beat: This piece is cryptic - we want to understand more of what you mean and what you're trying to say. Next time, would you break down the riddle?*

## Honor Who?

Forget the hall because I'm still locked up. And now that I'm in the honor unit, I gotta do a lot or they going to kick us out of the unit. So I say forget the hall because every lil' thing we do they will kick us out and that make me bad ...because staff keep throwing the honor unit in our faces. Man I feel like some of the system trying to disrespect us.

**-Mike**

*From The Beat: It's good you wrote your feelings out instead of going off on staff and getting kicked out. That's the kind of honor that you carry inside you, no matter what unit you are in.*

## This Ain't A Dream

What's up with it Beat? This Kash Money here I am just to express myself.

Well every mad ass day I wake up I just remember this ain't a dream it's real, but everyday that passes I just get closer to getting released... so I'm just gone take it like a man face my 6 months and get the hell out of here. 'Cause it ain't cool being here, but when I held that 9 all I could see was my mamma's eyes.

I live in the ghetto surrounded by haters it's hard to survive, but we have to do it. Sometimes I don't even know why I'm still in this world, I been shot three times and I'm still here, sometimes I think is because of my mamma's prayers.

Well peace and I just want to say rest in peace to my homies.

**-Kash Money**

*From The Beat: Three times and you're still here. That's pretty incredible... some people don't even get that second chance, and here you are, on your fourth! A fourth chance to do good, to be happy, to dry your mama's tears... to do well in life. Are you gonna take it?*

## Common Sense

What's up Beat? This is your boy again. Well I'm gonna talk about "common sense." See I would not be locked up if I used common sense. I wasn't thinking when I was doing wrong. But when I stop and think about it. It was stupid and dumb. I should think about it before I act. Well here's a little poem I made while being at camp.

Being here is not real.

Doing what they say is not how I feel.

Seeing what the staff never see.

What I see is hard.

Everyone play with their card.

See money is the answer

And the teacher is not picking everyone with their hand-up

See it take a real man to stand up.

Well I got to leave see you later.

Well till next time, got to go.

**-V-Boy**

*From The Beat: Thanks! Especially the line about the teacher... because on the one hand, it's about what happens in class, on the other hand it's also what can happen in this country, when some people just don't get noticed, even though they are trying for success just like any other citizen. Your hand is up now, and we see you.*

## My Definition of Common Sense

Common since is when you know something without anyone telling you. Like a door is something you walk through to get somewhere else. That's common sense.

Making money to provide for my family is skills of common sense.

**-Arkansas**

*From The Beat: This is a smart definition of common sense, but one thing we have to ask: If you are making the money illegally, is it still common sense? Because illegal money leads to drama and arrests, which means suddenly, there's no one there to bring in that money!*

## Last Day At Camp

Shhh my last day at camp went horrible. Well I started off going to camp taking a pee test. Caught a dirty, so I say "screw it," you know the code.

So I go to court about to get released and slap. Judge hit me in the face with the news that he wants me to be clean so he decide to give me another shot at peeing and hopefully I get a clean. Well I go back to camp, the same thing happens. I take a piss in the cup and wait well once again ...dirty!

I get back to court the judge feels like being so nice as to let me test once again. I pee in the cup and once again dirty. So, I get slapped luckily the judge likes me enough to let me try to have a clean pee test by Friday. Today's Tuesday 19. Hopefully if all goes well. Friday the 22nd you'll see ya boy again back out on the streets doing my thing.

What is being affected by this? The impact on what this is doing to me is stopping me from going to my first day of college. Damn also missing out on two different job interviews one at Starbucks coffee shop, and another at I.H.O.P, the International House Of Pancakes.

Well hopefully when I get out of here on Friday I can still go to my classes and reschedule interviews for myself so I can get a steady job.

**-Btb**

*From The Beat: We have faith that you will be able to bounce back from this, and we hope you quit catching dirties, because nothing is worth losing freedom and success!*

## Camp

Check it out, they call me Lil' Knuckle. Well I'm up in here at camp Wilmont Sweeney. This camp thang goes way harder than the hall. We up here out all day we get home passes every weekend after one month. The only bad things about this camp is the showers, also these camp staff be really tryin' to act like they the police with their bootsy green sheets and incidents.

They be telling us it's quiet time then they ask us something and when we answer they get us in trouble. Well I haven't got in trouble for that but they'll try to get you for that. But other than that it's cool.

So it's good when I get my first home pass I'm gonna instantly get picked up by my mom go eat go swimming then get dropped off at my dad's house, see my lady -- and fast.

After that I'm going to be back up here let these weeks pass by something fast while I go home every weekend. This program is too easy for me to mess it up.

Tomorrow I get my support meeting then I get to know what date I'll be getting released. I'm gonna pimp this program, get out be with my family female and my homeboys.

**-Lil' Knuckle**

**From The Beat:** The best way to get through camp is to join every single program they offer. Why? Because it's free education. Because you could find a job, an interest, a skill, something so that when you get out you have more choices on what to do with your life. Tell us which programs work out for you!

## Seems Like I Lose Everyone I Love

Damn I feel like dying sometimes.

Man, it seems like I loose everybody I love.

I lost my Uncle Paco and my favorite cousin Burger ....

Damn, they gone,

I miss them so much just hanging on the block with ya'll with a mouth full of rocks.

Running down the street with a chop the police on us.

Damn lost Miko to the system he looking at a few years.

When I bounce back it's gonna be over

**-Clay-D**

**From The Beat:** We know that sometimes you must feel like the sole survivor, but on the other hand, it's good that you are still standing. You can be the one who makes it, and who carries forth the memories and spirits of all the loved ones who couldn't be with you.

## My Voice Inside

What's up Beat? This is Momo (again)... Here's my poem!!

My life is filled with loss.

My life as been a way I only

Knew to grow up fast

Do the math

No moms. No pops, no money. No guide

I only follow my voice inside.

Some times

You can get lucky sometimes you slide.

But most of the time you ride all the way fill you crash and burn

But I'll never get my turn

'Cause I'm gonna move it

No matter how you take it

I'm gonna make it

**-Momo**

**From The Beat:** Welcome back, Momo! Not to the hall, of course, we're always sorry to see a writer in lockdown, but it's still good to see you on our pages, spilling your heart with heat and skill.

## This Life Don't Get You Nowhere

Like one of the homie's songs said, "we can square up and box

or we can let loose the chops

we so good we even let you choose."

But the problem is this game ain't up for everyone, 'cause first you reach the end, you in a dead end block, this life don't get you nowhere but two places: Prison or dead

and once you want to change it's too late you either behind bars or 6 feet under

I wanted to stop but too late. You already in it,

it's a code of honor we all have, never turning you back, or else you will find yourself in a body bag,

if you in it you in it for life, mostly everyone that leaves usually die,

so too many of us rather take a life then get taken,

in these street there is the prey and predator so what do you choose.

It's all on you.

But I got one thing to say, to those that ain't in it, just turn your back to the street and get to school, learn so you'll become someone in your life.

**-Jesus**

**From The Beat:** It's never too late -- and for every person you name that got killed for trying to get out, we can show you someone who got out and kept his respect because the homies recognized he was trying to do something for himself, his loved ones, his people. We do hope you believe us when we say that you deserve the life you put in the last two lines of this smart, somber flow.

## America and The Racist Laws

See me, I'm not like these other dudes. I could go the distance.

I see through the lines. America is trying to blind us with all this media, sports, and money. What people don't see is that America is taking our rights slowly. And most of the laws are racist. It's hard to get a job with out them stereotyping us. I'm not black I'm a pacific islander I'm Tongan. It's hard for us too.

Truly I think if Obama becomes president he will get assassinated and there will be a war among us Americans. That's how you know the world is coming to an end and it's to end at a racist war.

**-Toki**

**From The Beat:** Obama is a good example to bring up. He grew up in a racist America -- back when it was way worse, and segregation still existed! But he didn't let that get him down, instead he studied, he worked, and now he's in a position where he can make a difference in the world. Sure, he risks his life. But kids risk their lives on the streets every day. At least Obama is risking his life for something he believes in. So tell us, Toki, what do YOU believe in. Are you ready to do as you say and go the distance?

## My Son

April 9th 2008, I had my precious little boy. Seyni Mykell ...is my world, I would do anything for him. Sometimes I wonder why I decided to get pregnant. Then I realized it's because I didn't have nobody to love me. Seyni has made my days brighter in so many ways. His smile, the way he cries. I think my son is going to be better than me, 'cause I'm going to teach him better.

My son has encouraged me to be a better friend, sister, daughter, and most of all a better mother. Thank you Senyi, my son.

**-Lil' Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a beautiful piece. We hope one day your son gets to read it. Most importantly we hope you and he are re-united soon.



## Not So Bad At Camp

This yo boy Manie writing you all from Camp Sweeney. I already been here a month and I got one home pass so far. It's not so bad up here, with a few exceptions.

I am working on getting my GED up here too. This weekend I might be gone on another home pass, then after that I am gone start my overnights. The only thing I think about up here is all my fallen soldiers but I know they living on in the after life, I ain't tripping off nothing other than that so I basically have no stress, no stress, no stress.

I plan to get a job so I can make money legally. I don't plan to go to college cause that's gone. Basically I mean I am not going back to school. I am done with school. If it happens to come my way I would probably take it though. I want just go sign up for it maybe cause that's out.

**-Manie**

**From The Beat:** It's good to see how you are handling yourself up at camp, it shows that you can handle stress and responsibility. We hope you consider college or trade schools, because more education leads to fatter paychecks!

## About My Hood

Yea this yo' man Lil' Rell writing about my hood.

So yea in my hood it's a lot of thangs going on, like people selling drugs and smoking weed everyday. I have a lot of friends and family in my hood. Everybody looks out for one another.

It's only three people from my street but only two run the whole hood and that's me and T-Face. But every time I get my home passes I go straight from my house to the hood. My hood is right by a school called Frick. I used to go to that school a long time ago with T-Face.

We always have party's in the hood, I remember when I threw a bando party five-days straight we had so many girls there it just ain't funny. We had drank, weed and so on.

Well I don't want to waste my time doing this ...so I'll write ya'll some other time.

**-Lil' Rell**

**From The Beat:** Waste of time? We feel like this is one of your best pieces so far! This is you telling your story, about your life, about what you struggle with every day. We may not agree with all the choices you made, but we're honored to print your description of the home you love. Yet claiming you run things concerns us. Take a look where you sit tonight. You're not running much inside here.

## Three Questions, Three Answers

Stop Sign

1. My mom been looking at me strange

I have this thing in my head that say "don't" even I do I sometimes

Public Execution

2. I think execution it's very bad

I think people shouldn't be executed in public

I wouldn't like to see nobody being executed

I would not wished nobody o be executed

Common Sense

3. When I heard common sense I heard something good

Common sense is like "good choice" to my mom

I didn't use my common sense when that's why I'm here

**-Edwin**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for putting your thoughts down here, we are looking forward to seeing more of your writing!

## The Student Council Of Juvenile Hall

What's up Beat? This is ya boy Fear letting you what's going on behind J-hall walls. They have just made an honor unit. Everybody say what's the honor in jail? You wanting to change or help people. We are starting a student council. Because we want to make a change, be heard, but we need help! Help from the people in America that want to see a change. That think statistics are wrong, people who want to help change these racist laws. To give us chance to survive, to become something because we have dreams.

And it's not to rob, steal, or kill. Most of all it's not to spend the rest of our life in jail working in the kitchen.

**-Fear**

**From The Beat:** We are looking forward to hearing how you and the student council work together, because yes, even in the system, you can find honor, you can find pride, you can build habits that will take you far in life. Keep us posted, with your news from inside the walls!

## Kinda Messed Up About My Dad

Yo what's up Beat well I wrote a piece about my dad and feel kinda messed up about it now, 'cause he just got locked up, and I'll never see him again. He got caught for a murder and it was a long time ago. He was using self-defense.

Anyways I think I have to give him some credit for trying to be there anyways I'm at camp and feel messed up I could not see him one more time before he went in.

Well I just say I'm gonna miss you pops, and I just wish I could of smoked a joint or took one more drink with him...

Well Beat that's all I got with my broke arm late.

**-Big Hungry**

**From The Beat:** We feel pain for you and for your dad, but even more for your dad. He's tried to overcome his own struggles, with violence, with addiction, with the system, and it might seem right now like he lost. But then he has a son, you, and you can still have the life you deserve... you told us people don't have faith in you - so now we ask, do you have faith in yourself?

## In The Honor Unit

Now that I'm in the honor unit I hear a lot of ninjas whining and crying about what they expected, but the reality is that we still in the hall doin' time.

I also think the system be on some other shhh ...they think 'cause we in this honor unit we gonna be perfect.

**-Damani**

**From The Beat:** Just more proof that nothing in life is what you always expect it. Still, what are the things you LIKE about being in the honor unit?

## Executions Have An Effect On Me

I would not like to watch people get executed that's like watching someone getting killed on the streets, something I will not want to see. That was messed up to have back in the day it was like a movie when someone gets executed. I think they should be in a private place, not public.

I think it has an effect on me because I know that if I do a serious crime that they give me the death penalty so that makes me think twice about things.

**-DI**

**From The Beat:** Yes, it is really gruesome to imagine seeing an execution. Although many people question the effectiveness of the Death Penalty, we hope that it does some good if it not only makes you think twice about doing crimes, but actually keeps you from doing anything that could put you at risk. We want to see you alive and doing productive stuff in your community and growing old.

## My Life

What's Good Beat its that homeboy G-Shadow from la calles de San Francisco.

Today I wanna talk about my life. Well I'm Puerto Rican and Mexican. My pops is from Puebla, Mexico and my moms is from Ponce, Puerto Rico. I'm seventeen 'bout to be eighteen in December. I'm a Capricorn I got two kids, a boy named Angel and a girl named Selena. I was raised in San Francisco's Mission District. I live in the East Bay now in Oakland but I'm 'bout to move to Hayward, feel me.

The judge says I'm gang-related and all this other BS, it's cool 'cause I know it's true. I ain't gone change anytime soon. I know The Beat going to mouth off sayin (on quote) "You need to change your life, you got kids" blah blah. I'm in too deep I can't stop I made the enemies and even if I could I wouldn't 'cause I live by the motto and the homies know what it is.

These backstreets is faulty. Gang Task be trying to catch us slippin' but they can't and any home girls want to holler at this homeboy just catch me by the corner store by the café posted and chillin wit' my primo smoking on a 'port getting blazed sippin' on Mickeys or Hennessy wit' no chaser. Free the hood!

**-G-Shadow**

**From The Beat:** You know us so well. Yeah, we think you should get outta what you've been doing because we hate to see you risk dying young and the pain your family could so easily have to experience. At the same time, we understand how deep you are in, not only you but generations deep. It is hard to pull out of it, and we hear you don't really want to. We get it. At the same time, when you say "free the hood," we want that too—but it's gonna take more than the 5-0 laying off the hood to truly free it. What's your contribution?

## Yield!

If I had a "stop" sign, I wouldn't be in here!! It's like every time I do good, someone or something comes around and I end up in here. It's like I try to do good but somehow I still mess up. It's not like I wake up and say "Ayy... I'm gonna get charged for robbery today!" Namean? I wake up thinking I'm going to do good, but I end up doing wrong.

I think my "stop" sign is more like a "yield"! When I know I'm doing bad, it's like I "yield" and keep going. That yield is like a pause and I know I'm doing wrong. I think about it but I keep doing it!!

**-Megan**

**From The Beat:** We can sense your frustration. The first step in changing a pattern of destructive behavior is recognizing it, and it sounds like you are coming to this realization. Please don't give up on yourself or think that you can't possibly change. You can, and the next step will be to take a hard look at those "someones" and "somethings" and start thinking about the situations you will soon face on the outs.

## Common Sense

Well what I think common sense is like your mind that tells you right or wrong. Also like if your conscience and intuition that guide you and let you know what you do right and wrong.

Well also I think people ignore they common sense. I say this cause I didn't use mine when I did what I did. Some people think they too slick and they ain't going down or they get so used to ignoring it, you don't hear no more.

**-Damon**

**From The Beat:** Yep, we hear you. We all got common sense and yet sometimes we don't use it, or straight up ignore it. Knowing what you do now, what advice could you offer that might help someone in your situation start listening to their common sense to stay out of situations that are going to get them locked up?

## My Confessions

**-Young Marco**

**From The Beat:** You are such a talented writer, we were surprised to see you used someone else's writing as your Beat piece this week. If you want to include work that inspires you, that's fine, quote a few lines. But make sure you give credit and include your own work too. When you put your name at the bottom of a piece that's not yours, you are plagiarizing, which disrespects the artist you apparently admire.

## God Has Paused My Story

My life has just started. The hate and pain are gone. God has paused my story and allowed me to correct my mistakes. My life is clear of any harm. Yet I know there is danger yet to come.

Me being locked up has allowed me to think. It has allowed me to become one with the Bible. It has allowed me to eliminate the drugs, alcohol, and most important the streets. The streets bring danger that no man can possibly bring. Even though I've stepped away from the streets, they still continue to call my name. Therefore the danger that comes along with streets will follow me.

**-Mississippi**

**From The Beat:** You are taking a good long look at your life and seeing what you can change, yet you are being realistic about the temptations that are still there. Imagine for yourself the life you really want to have, and then hold this close to you when you feel that temptation. If you can keep your eyes seeing clearly and think about the consequences, what you could lose, you will be able to hold steady. Many people think that feeling temptation means one has to give in to it, but the truth is that we can feel a whole lot of desire and still stick to our larger goals. May you have the strength to do that.

## Want To Put Their Life On Paper

I am gone on the eighteenth so I not trippin on nothing so you can do what you want with my freehand writing. But I respect have ya'll come here and spend time with the kids in here because they need help all of them.

People are spending time on something they really like doing and people really be going through things in their life. They really want to put their life on a piece of paper. So The Beat Within helps them have a place to tell them life story and helps them in a lot of ways.

**-Black**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for the good words about our program. We wish you the best as you move out into the world.

## Birthday In Camp

A what's up this is J Baby I'm writing from camp Sweeney. This shhh hella easy, we get rec every day after school. So far I've been having a good program and this is only my fourth week here. I got into it with a couple of people but ain't nobody tryin' to lose they home pass.

Today is the August 19th and it is also my birthday this is my first time spending my birthday in jail or camp, but I'm ain't tripping cause I get to go home this weekend and my peoples 'bout to give a BBQ for me. I can't wait to I get out of here and see my family, friends, squad and whoever there is to see out there. I'm just happy to be seeing somebody.

I gotta do about six months then I'm out of this place for good, my plans is to get out and never come back, but knowing me I'll never know what happen. I'm bout to pimp this shhh and for all y'all already out there, when y'all get here, don't run.

**-J-Baby**

**From The Beat:** Tell us more about the details of your plan to "get out and never come back" ... in the same way that you have a plan of success for getting out of camp, you can make one for staying out of jail! What is it?

## Only God Can Judge Me

Santa Rita, YA or maybe the penitentiary  
Judge handin out time, nothin less than a quarter  
century

Some did it, for others mistaken identity  
But whatever the case, we all away from our family  
The judge and the DA laugh at us like it's a joke  
And I don't get why they still over sentencing folks  
Ten years for a home invasion? Now that's a head turner  
Eight months for a burner, but twenty-five for a murder  
plea said four birds get you a life sentence  
the DA don't know you, but claims you're a menace  
He wants to give you one hundred years, giving everything  
he's got  
Now if it was up to me, I'll leave the judging up to you  
God!

**-Mackin' Nam**

**From The Beat:** We hear you. Sometimes it can feel so unfair the way they hand out sentences. Maybe you think God might have a more even handed view of the situation. What things do you think S/He would take into account that the judge doesn't think about when sentencing? How do you think God would feel about what's happening down in the hood and the choices you are making with your life?

## My Stop Sign

Do you ever stop before you do something? Think before you act is what parents say. Me? I ignore my brain. That conscience that's saying "Hell no, don't go that way". You think if you follow those helpful little guys it would make a change. Me myself, every time I have that feeling my brain is left wondering kind of like stuttering on pause.

My stop sign is when I'm left alone, in a situation or when the police come. STOP halt and there I go, back to Jail. Maybe if I listen to the good conscience I could stay out free. My stop sign is the worst and last option.

**-Lil' Baby/ Nayashade**

**From The Beat:** So, right now it sounds like your internal stop sign is not your friend. But when you have ignored the stop sign, you have suffered consequences. How can you make friends with your stop sign? How can it become something that feels good and helps you out rather than something that just nags at you and that you ignore? You know those good friends who look out for us and tell us honestly when we're about to made a bad choice? How can you become that friend for yourself?

## Public Execution

I would want to see public execution because I think it's interesting to see people die. I would sit there an' watch cause obviously they did some wrong to be getting killed in the first place or else they wouldn't be getting killed. I think that there's nothin' wrong bout watchin people die cause it's interesting and fun to watch.

**-La Guera**

**From The Beat:** Would you feel differently if it was one of your homies or family members? Since there is so much evidence that suggests that the criminal justice system discriminates based on race and makes convictions based on unreliable eye witness testimony, do you think people are sometimes executed for crimes they didn't commit?

## Stop Sign Of Life

My stop sign is life if I don't feel right or I have a weird feelin' about something if I don't feel right it's all bad there is a big stop sign. I need to have a good feeling an doing something like I know nothing bad or something wrong is going to happen feel me!

**-Redo**

**From The Beat:** Did you get the weird feeling before you did what you did that ended you up in the hall? If so, what might you do differently next time? If not, what do you think about that?

## Stop Sign Of Life

My stop sign is life if I don't feel right or I have a weird feelin' about something if I don't feel right it's all bad there is a big stop sign. I need to have a good feeling an doing something like I know nothing bad or something wrong is going to happen feel me!

**-Redo**

**From The Beat:** Did you get the weird feeling befor

## Common Sense

What's up Beat? Well when I hear the words "common sense" I think of someone who has common sense meaning to me someone who knows right from wrong.

I also think about the times that my mom told me to use common sense, she didn't actually say use common sense, but she always told me try to do good and stay out of trouble and do the best you can and to me that's "common sense."

**-Gilberto**

**From The Beat:** What do you think your mom would say or what do you think your common-sense could have told you that could help you stay outta the hall?

## Dear God

Dear God this is your son James talking to you. God when I get out I want to change. God I try to change through these walls but it's hard because people always testing you at all times. I try to change my ways but people stay running they mouth for no reason and that makes me mad. Then when people say things to me they make me go bad.

God I'm going to try to stay focused I promise but it's hard. God I ask that you help me get into my word more and change my mind of how I think. Reason I say that is because I think bad thing about people sometimes and that's not right to do.

Beat my bad I just had to get this off my chest because I been doing through a lot. Because I want to live holy and it's kind of hard to do that. But God I'm trying and I want to God just come in my life more.

**-James**

**From The Beat:** We feel you. It is so hard to change, even for people on the outs who have never had to face all you are facing right now. Speaking the truth about your difficulties is a very important step. Now you can face the difficulty head-on, say Yeah I see you, and keep fighting. We hope that God can support you and that you can stay strong, for/with God and yourself. When people say things to you and you feel mad, say to yourself, Yeah, I'm mad but God doesn't want me to get stuck on this. Imagine the loudmouth person is on a TV screen and just Turn down the volume. Step out f the BS and stick to your path. Remember it will be hard on the outs too, just in some different ways, so this is good training.

## Wussup

I really want to get sentenced but they keep pushing my court date. I was supposed to get sentenced on July 20th with my co-partner that's in another unit but they pushed my court date to August 20th.

I want to let him know that I love him and I want him to keep his head up because they sending him to the Y. That's also where they're trying to send me, but if things go good I might be able to go to a group home in LA for four-five months because of my charges, so they want to extend my time.

**-Lil' Kev**

**From The Beat:** It is so frustrating to have to keep waiting and waiting. Good luck to you in your sentencing. We'll be keeping you in our thoughts.



## And The Award Goes To...

What's wit' it Beat? I'm 'bout through with these 2008 Gs in here, all they do is talk. I don't know what's goin' on nowadays where are all these hype mans coming from? On outs they be quiet as a mouse but get in here where they safe and start runnin' they mouth like really out there getting down.

To all you hype mans out there, miss me with all that talk, gon n stop while you ahead because the audience you entertaining aint gon safe you when it get spunky and the time come to put some actions with your words. Not everybody's cut out for this lifestyle man. If you ain't got it in you, why set yourself up for a loss? Say what you mean & mean what you say. Real men honor they word. Just know aint no turning around or "I was just playin'" once them things come out.

When you keep blowing smoke in a non-smoking area, it's only a matter of time before you get evicted out the facility and exposed. Do us all a favor and find a new occupation 'cause the game don't need you. Don't fake the funk, people respect you more when you be yourself. But ya'll ninjas grown, do what you want.

**-Young Markie Bo**

**From The Beat:** We read so many pieces about people who are fakers acting tough and talking tough in the hall. Why do you think people might feel the need to act tough (in a max unit or elsewhere)? Are there negative things that other people say or ways the steets/hall treats you if you don't seem tough enough? If someone isn't a gangsta but somehow ends up in a max unit, how else would they get respect if they don't talk like they get down?

## First time, Last Time

This is my first time in the hall and it ain't as bad as I thought it would be, but still, this ain't a place I'd ever come back to. This ain't for me. I can't be havin' somebody tell me what to do, when to do it, and how it should be done. Plus, I love to eat and this food is not the business...these (well some) girls are hella messy too...that's another thang I can't stand! I can't even stand females, yet I'm locked up with hella them!

Intake is cool cause it's boys and girls and the staff... let me tell you they get on my last nerve 'cept two of 'em. I ain't gone say no names, but they know who they is...

I don't regret comin' here cause I know what to expect, but on some solid shhh I ain't comin' back!

**-Britt**

**From The Beat:** So what changes are you going to make to ensure that you don't come back? What landed you in here in the first place? Do you have regrets?

## Turn I All Around

Yes I have a stop sign in life, and after I did what I did and got locked up, this is it for me. I'm not coming back. There's better things in life than doing all bad things. The time I am spending here I could be doing positive things with my time, but I chose to do this so I have to face the time. But this is the last time.

My mom told me that if I don't do right I'm going to be locked up and right before my eyes, I was. So when I go home in five more days, I'm going to do the right thing and I promise myself that I'm going to go to school, and get money.

**-A'Chantae**

**From The Beat:** Can your P.O. help you get hooked up with a positive job? Pathways For Change is an organization in your community that helps young people with job placement (even at The Beat Within!) Ask for help from the system -you are entitled to it- and find out about resources to help you get back on track.

## Doing The Dishes

Common sense is doing something that make sense. Like when you're washing the dishes you should wipe off the table and the stove.

**-Lil' Nef**

**From The Beat:** Yes! But so many people forget to do that, don't they? What kinds of common sense choices do you think you could've made that would keep you on the outs next time?

## Sign

My mind is a stop sign to me. It makes me stop doing crimes and bad things. I used to be a bad person but I changed my life around so I wouldn't be in the system or dealing with police. I don't like to be in jail locked up with hella boys.

**-Jimmy**

**From The Beat:** Yeah, it's no fun being locked up and not having your freedom. Sounds like you have changed your life around but haven't yet had to stand the test of the outside world. What do you think the hardest, most tempting thing is that you'll have to say no to when you on the outs? What plans do you have to stick to your new path? Like who can you turn to who will help keep you strong? What can you say when someone offers you a little bit of whatever it is that will start you down the wrong path?

## Common Sense

Common sense is when you know right from wrong.

When you're not dingy, not too slow.

And when you know you doing something wrong and you know better.

Common sense is when you take time to think instead of just going through life not knowing nothing.

Common sense is a good thing to have.

Parents should have taught it to you when you were young.

**-Lil Baby/ Nayashade**

**From The Beat:** Can people learn common sense when they're older if their parents didn't teach it to them?

## I Know Common Sense

When I hear the words "common sense" I think they mean knowing right from what's wrong. I think a good example of common sense is using your right mind to determine something you're going to do or say that will apply a good or bad outcome.

When my mother told me to use my "common sense", I basically thought to do what I know I'm supposed to do and not the opposite because that would be basically not using my common sense to know what it is she basically was telling or asking me to do.

I recall a time when I didn't use "common sense" was when I acted or spoke before I took actions. I didn't think about what I was about to do or say before I committed robbery, assault, battery.

As you can see, my non-use of "common sense" led me here to Alameda County Juvenile Hall where I'm serving time for not thinking before I went and committed a selfish act upon another helpless citizen who had enough "common sense" to contact police in some way, shape, or form and have me arrested for my extremely selfish act of crime of non-use of "common sense" which put me own self in this dumb predicament that I'm in as of today.

**-Ashanti**

**From The Beat:** Well, it sounds like you have thought a lot about what happened and you have learned from the experience. We hope you can make a fresh start and put this behind you.

## Thank You

Thank you God,  
 Thank you Ms. Sheppard.  
 Thank you Ms. Webb,  
 Thank you Ms. Loudermilk,  
 Thank you Ms. Belton,  
 Thank you Ms. Williams,  
 Thank you Ms. Graham,  
 Thank you Ms. Gayfield,  
 Thank you Ms. Henry,  
 Thank you Ms. Gordon,  
 Thank you Ms. K. Mitchell,  
 Thank you Mr. Godfrey and Ms. Godfrey,  
 Thank you Ms. Chamber,  
 Thank you T-Brown,  
 Thank you Watson,  
 Thank you Ms. Caldwell,  
 Thank you Ms. Riley,  
 Thank you Ms. Elzy,  
 Thank you Mr. Coleman,  
 Thank you Mr. Jacobs,  
 Thank you best friend,  
 Thank you Ms. Edwards school teacher and Mr. Delgado,  
 Thank you Ms. Lacey,  
 Thank you Ms. Chatfield,  
 Thank you Ms. Nilson. T  
 hank you everybody for all your support...you encouraged me when no one else did.

**-S-Lyfe**

**From The Beat:** There are many people pulling for you out there, who appreciate your sparkling wit and intelligence and your courage as you make important life changes. We should all do as you have done in your piece and take a few minutes to reflect with gratitude on the people who have helped us in life and encouraged us.

## My Personal Stop Sign

Hello, my name is Kim. Do I have a personal "stop sign"? Well...sometimes I do, but at times I have impulse decisions and that's the reason I keep coming back here: sometimes I don't think before I act!

My personal stop sign would be thinking of my loved ones (like my mom) and what they would think of what I was doing, like selling drugs or prostitution. The only problem I've had with my impulse decision-making is running and fighting.

I've been in foster care since I was four years old and by the time I was twelve I would always get frustrated with my problems and all I could do was RUN! I mean it wasn't all I could do, I just didn't think it out and think of what my consequence would be!

Now, I've recently ran from three group homes and I'm waiting to go to my fourth one. Hopefully it is still in the state of California and hopefully I don't go to a lockdown group home. Impulse decision-making is a bad habit I have picked up, so I guess now my stop sign would be... STOP! THINK! This might be your last chance in staying in the state to be close to your loved ones! And also if you keep this up it's only gonna lead you to bad things, and the worst - PRISON!

If you're going to do something wrong, STOP! Take time to THINK! And pray knowing that God will always be with you! Have Faith.

**-Kimberly**

**From The Beat:** Our hearts go out to you because you are clearly at a crossroads in your young life. You're right about the increasingly serious consequences if you keep running and keep doing criminal activity. You must find a way (and get support) to make a living legally and keep yourself safe. You have faced a lot of challenges, being in the system for so many years. We hope that you can be kind to yourself, forgive yourself for past mistakes, and take positive steps towards the future.

## Back On A Fluke

Hey Beat, it's me: the one and only Queazy.

Man, I'm back on a juvenile warrant, but before I came, I was housed in Rita for some new charges. It wasn't as bad as everybody say it was.

Well, the water and clothes is nasty as hell. My whole face broke out and it looked as if I had hecka rashes on my face.

The only thing that was cool was the food 'cause you can buy it, so yeah, that was 'bout it. I was in the max unit with the killers. I was there for assaulting a police officer and some ol' other dumb stuff, but it's good though. I wish I was there right now because there are no rules at all and here you have to follow rules. Can't wait 'till I leave, whenever that is, 'cause I got like so many cases pending in Alameda County.

Been coming to jail since I was twelve years old and it's getting old. I'm eighteen years old. Life is too too short...

**-Lil' Queazy**

**From The Beat:** Real talk: reading your piece broke our hearts. It sounds like you have resigned yourself to a life behind bars, saying Rita ain't that bad because the food is better and there are less rules than at juvy. We hate to see someone so young hand their life to the system. Even if you have a ton of cases pending, there ARE things you can do to take control of your life and your happiness. You can learn, you can take an active role in your legal defense, you can earn a degree, you can make art. There is so much more to life. Please don't give up on yourself.

## Why It's Good To Smile!

The topic I chose is why I think people should always smile. Smiling (and meaning it) is really important. Not only for your self-esteem but your day always seems better...no matter what. Also, smile at someone every day.

**-Gabriela**

**From The Beat:** It's amazing how much we can change our state of mind when we really make an effort, isn't it?

## Right From Wrong

When you think of common sense, what comes to mind for me is knowing right from wrong. If you're doing something that you know is wrong, common sense tells you that you should stop doing that and walk away. Most people would call that a conscience. Some people don't hear their conscience, simply because they choose not to listen to it. But if you had common sense you would know to do right from wrong in the beginning.

**-Xaviera**

**From The Beat:** Solid advice! Some people talk about having a "moral compass", that always tells them which way is the right way, just like how a compass always points you to North, no matter where you're standing. Are there other ways to describe it?

## To Think

I think that common sense is when you think about something before you do it. Also when you're smart. I know some people that are smart, but have no common sense whatsoever. I guess they just prefer to be in the streets makin' money, hey! If that's how they gotta live, then you gotta do what you gotta do! I mean life isn't always about being smart, if you have common sense you don't gotta be smart. I mean, I rather have common sense than to be smart, cause I want to be walking down the street talking to myself.

**-Ciara**

**From The Beat:** What do you mean by "talking to yourself"? Do you mean telling yourself what choices you want to make and what you want to do versus somebody else telling you what to do?

## Ninjas Ain't Loyal

'Sup with The Beat? Today I'm goin' to talk 'bout how ninjas ain't faithful or real to their "homies." Ninjas be acting the part in here. Ninjas be acing hard and like they somebody, but really ninjas ain't shhh. They put up a front in front of certain ninjas, but as soon as ninjas alone, they act like a whole different person.

My point is if you think your homie will have your back and act the same on the outs as they do in here, then you gonna be mad, like I am now. We thick in here. We deep in here, and only one out of two ninjas is being theyselves. That otha one is an actor, neva a factor, so ninjas need to stop suckin' ninjas that's fake.

My point is your homies ain't your homies, so ninjas should go solo, so they don't find out the hard way like me.

**-D-Boy**

**From The Beat:** We wish you would spend more time focusing on your own thoughts about how you can stay free instead of wasting time pointing fingers. What's your plan for success? Do you have one?

## A King Or A Pawn

Life is like chess! Look, if life was chess, your life would be the king. In chess, your objective is to protect the king. In life, you gotta protect yo' life. So make sure you use yo' pawns good and sacrifice. That means lose your friends to save your life.

**-Money**

**From The Beat:** Sacrifice your friends to save your life? That doesn't sound like any king we'd like to be ruled by. Isn't it interesting that the king is the weakest of all chess pieces...

## My Life sentence

Man, I can't stand this place, I can't wait till I get out. I miss my family and can't stop thinking about them. I ain't give never come back. This just ain't me in here.

I ain't never gone pick up nothing else no more. I'm for showly out this thang straight up, dawg.

It ain't up to me though. It up to the judge to give me my second chance to see my family, friends, and you know the rest.

**-Rel**

**From The Beat:** We had to put your two pieces into one because the second one wasn't long enough to publish by itself. We're glad you can't stand this place. It's not a place you should stand! In fact, it's not a place you should ever allow yourself to return to!

## I Gotta Listen To My Sister And Grandma Soon

My sister and my grandma and my girlfriend try to give me good advice. They tell me, don't do things that I do, like don't go out there in the streets, but they know what's going on with me, what I'm doin'. They just say, "Don't go out there" to get myself in trouble. Basically they're right, but I don't listen to them, 'cause it's hard for me to listen to them because I'm used to doin' whatever I want. Why should I listen to them now? But I gotta start listenin' to them pretty soon.

My sister didn't get into trouble because she don't want to go to jail, but my girlfriend, she been in jail four, five times, but she don't get in trouble no more.

**-Jt**

**From The Beat:** Is your real challenge creating a new life for yourself that is as real, fun and compelling as the streets are for you now? Is there any way you can hang in the streets without doing whatever it is that gets you in trouble and brings you back to the Ranch? Can you also examine your talents and skills and see whether the outside world welcomes you and them? Go for it!

## My Stop Sign

My stop sign is when the cops get me. I have drawn lines because I don't want to go to jail.

**-Jay-Jay**

**From The Beat:** But here you are! What happened? Did you forget to draw those lines?

## Nothing Much!

Mayne, what's good with The Beat! Yeah, mayne, this ya boy Ulala posted up once again... For some reason, I have nothing to talk about 'cause I'm thinking way too much for me to be able to write it on paper, ya dig... So yeah, mayne, ya boy is waitin' to get sent away to the island to do whateva...

But you know I'ma do my time! But for now I'm gone! Keep ya head up to all tha homies!

**-Ulala**

**From The Beat:** When you're doing too much thinking, that's the time to write along piece, getting some of those thoughts down on paper. What is the "whateva" you plan to do on the island? We're dying to know, ya dig?

## Sex On My Mind

What's up Beat! Man, I've been talking to my roommate about what we both finally do when we get out. We both be talking about how we both gonna be smacking them girls. Have sex, that's a must!

We've both been locked up for a long time. But we also said that we going to have a full schedule because he don't want to come back here and I don't wanna go back to county. But I hope I get out soon. I really don't got nothing good on my mind right now so I'ma sign off...

**-Wiggims**

**From The Beat:** Yes, we hope you get out soon, too. But even more, we hope that you never come back to another jail as long as you live.

## Common Sense

What up Beat?, Me, Ant same shhh.

But about some common sense, if you trying to be with the shhh, you better be ready to kill and die, because in these streets "you live by the gun you die by the gun."

I lost ninjas to this beef, so I'm in it to win it and when Ant leaves, I ain't going by myself! So I guess I ain't got no common sense.

**-Ant**

**From The Beat:** Whether you have common sense or not, you will have to live with — or die with — the consequences of the choices you make.

## Public Announcement

Man, what's up with The Beat, round? You know me. Just chillin' in the max, relaxed and all coo' like the Fresh Prince.

What's up with these ninjas that's half in the beef, really not even in the beef, talking like they really with it, an' then got the balls to talk down on the they ninjas like they halfway getting' it, spending they money on weed. Now that's "ironic."

My advice is if you gone say something 'bout the 'hood, really know what you talking 'bout, and don't just let your mouth open up. You know the rest.

**-E-boy**

**From The Beat:** We find it interesting that so many young people locked want to talk about the next guy instead of themselves. We're much more interested in why you're in the beef and what you think that's going to "earn" you? Tell us more about you and less about them.



## Common Senses

Something that isn't that hard to do. Don't touch fire, you will get burned. Meaning don't act dumb... and yes I have. Like for example, when my cousin was playing with fireworks when he knew he could get burned.

-Alex

**From The Beat:** What does your common sense tell you about how to stay out of places like this?

## Free Us All

I was humble for makin' it out the jungle. I never ever said nothing on this mic. I didn't want to. I'm a soldier. As soon as ninja give me a mission, I want my enemy territory to play my position ever broke 'cause even that ninja that's wearin yo' chain see me both from the city. But homie, we ain't the same. I remain in the same damn project building.

-Ron Tweez

**From The Beat:** We don't know who you're talking to, so we don't really understand what you're trying to say. Do you have a plan [other than the things that lead you here] for getting out of "the same damn project building?"

## County Time

Wassup Beat? Damn, I had court last week and it's all bad! It's all bad 'cause I turned 18 here, and they told me I have to serve some time, but not in YGC. I have to go to county jail or San Bruno.

I'm goin' through it now 'cause I have to do time. I'ma be away from my BM and my little son. That's just the consequences of my actions. To be real I don't know what I'm going to do, but I have to stay strong and be positive. I miss the fam bam!

There's always time for change.

-Smiley

**From The Beat:** We're sorry you have to do some county time, but the best advice we can give is just to do it and get out! You correctly talk about this being the consequences of your actions, but it's your son who is paying those consequences right along with you. What did he do to have to pay your consequences? The time for change is now. Contrary to what you believe, there is NOT always time for change because sometimes the consequences of not changing don't give you that next chance...

## Last Time Around

What's poppin' Beat? This yo' boy Curt hit you wit' the no braina. Yeah, I'm back once more, but it's something about this time that's different from last time. I think I'm getting older and this shhh getting weak.

I'm getting tired of it, so this time when I get out, I'ma go to school and get off probation and do this thing right. So until I see y'all again.

-Curt

**From The Beat:** Well, we hope your title says it all! You've given away too much of your young life to this cold system. Now it's time to take back control of your life so that you are your own master!

## Public Execution

I think go ahead, execute those who need to be, but just make it a private session. I wouldn't mind to watch. It might be interesting but cruel. I think the effect to the community is that people would be more tense to see crime. To me now it wouldn't have an effect on him.

-Alex

**From The Beat:** When you say "go ahead and execute those who need to be," who do you have in mind?

## Common Sense

When I hear "common sense," I think of it as something I could use a lot more when I make my choices. Most of the time when I do things. I don't think about getting caught. That's not cool 'cause you have to think before you act. If you don't, get ready to fight a case.

-Marvin

**From The Beat:** You've put it very well, Marvin. You either have to think before you act, or you'll have to do a lot of thinking after... We hope this is a lesson learned, and not just words to be forgotten...

## E'rybody Love Me

What's up e'rybody. Y'all know who this is. If y'all don't, well this Nique Bezy, and I'm 'bout to get out, you feel me. I don't even know why the hell I keep coming the hell back. This is not cool, keep putting these people and my business, and that ain't cool.

My big bra getting out next month. I gotta stay out. I gotta rock wit' ma bra most def. We gone be on the block rockin' together.

But anyway, my husband 'bout to get out, you feel me. You know ain't no joy without that third boy, my young Ice Wata... I miss him.

But anyways, I'ma stay rockin' with my goons to the fullest, and if you with it, I'm with it. Gone let me know I through my 'jets and the air and let it fall like snow.

But anyways, I love being me and I'm gone. Stay poppin'.

-Nique Bezy

**From The Beat:** How many times have you permitted yourself to be a slave here? How many more times will it take for you to see that if you do what you do, the system will also do what it does? How many times will you put yourself under the control of strangers before you figure out that your freedom is in your hands, and that you either keep it or give it away based on your choices. What you're looking forward to leads us to believe that you haven't learned that basic lesson yet.

## Juvenile Hall

This boosy-ass Juvenile Hall. Same-ass clothes, same-ass everything, just different days. Got to sit in the same-ass seat. And these same-ass staff. Man this shhh don't get fun.

-Charles

**From The Beat:** As long as you do the "same-ass" actions that got you here, then you can expect the "same-ass" institutional response.

## Head Up, Eyes Open

I ain't got shhh to say today, but you ninjas betta keep ya head up 'cause leavin' yo' shhh down ain't sweet. Anything could happen. Yo' shhh might just pop up and it could be over, ya dig. So pick ya head up and keep ya eyes open.

-Royce

**From The Beat:** Good advice, Royce. Are you following it?

## Out Of Pocket

I don't think it right for public execution. That stuff is embarrassing, They goin' to let some people that don't even know you look at you die. That is so out of pocket. I wish the government would put their feet in our shoes and see how we feel and what we gotta do to survive.

-Money Earn Vern

**From The Beat:** We agree with you, Vern. There is something particularly disgusting about inviting strangers to stand around and watch while the government puts you to death!

## Common Sense

Ey man, what's popping with The Beat? It's ya boy Weez. I remember when I was doing shhh without using my common sense, like robbing people without a second thought. Or quick to make flashes and loud noises, ya get me.

But now that I got older, I'm much wiser, even though we all make mistakes. But the person that made that stupid-ass mistake of killing the wrong people then ask for — no beg for — mercy. but you know I say to that shhh: knock you lights out!

-Weez

**From The Beat:** Even if you gave it a second thought, common sense should tell you that certain actions are likely to lead to these consequences. So, we sure hope that "older, wiser" Weez is in control. Yes, we all make mistakes, but if we make the same mistakes twice, then we deserve what we get.

## My Life

Runnin' from 5/0, that's my life  
Sellin' rocks on the block that's my life  
Watchin' over my family is my life  
Havin' lots of women around is my life  
Gettin' high is my life  
In and out of jail is my life  
Hopin' every day at rec I'm on the block top  
Every day is my life  
Comin' from the projects is my life  
Shootin' dice is my life  
Gettin' money is my life  
That's lil Paul life

-Paul

**From The Beat:** We can see how much pride you take in living your life in a way that guarantees that some of those runs from the 5/0 you will lose, like the one that got you here this time. So our question is really a very simple one: who's watching over your family now?

## Major Moves

The time for petty shhh is over. Can't settle for goldfishes when you can have a shark. Why swim in the pond when you got the ocean?

I've made petty decisions in my past, decisions I know I'm better than. Can't correct them, but I can prosper from them. I refuse to settle for less now. I'm on a bigger picture now.

Long money is what I'm after—forget small change. I need it all, ya dig? I need a cake, not a cupcake. When I get released from the Ranch, I'm on another page. I'm goen for all. When I'm satisfied, you suckas can have my crumbs. So until we meet again, Yung Chink gone be holden it down at the Ranch like I been doin'. undnH

-Yung Chink

**From The Beat:** You may be after "long money," but you don't write how you expect to get it. If you intend to continue doing whatever brought you to juvy and the Ranch, you may not even be able to get chump change. Come on! You've got talents and skills, and it seems like you're not afraid of hard work! You can do better than this!

## Ignoring Consequences

Common sense is something you know about, something like if you know a stove or iron is hot then you know not to touch it, or you'll get burned. Some people don't use common sense, like when they know something is going to come with a consequence, but they still do it.

-No Name

**From The Beat:** Did you forget to put your name because you are the example of someone who knew what you did was going to come with a consequence, but you still did it?

## You Thought You Was Sick

Growin' up where I am from brah ain't no joke. Either you out for your respect or you end up smoked, 12 shots to ya stomach, blood blockin' up ya throat. Yo' life flash before yo' eyes, while you runnin' outta hope.

And me, I'll be the shooter; you the ninja on the flo'. Or you runnin to yo' house, blood drippin' to ya toes. And if you get lucky you might just get paralyzed, you in a wheelchair boy, and you don't know why. 'Cause you thought you was sick and socked a ninja in the eye, and he crept up on yo' ass and let you have it by surprise.

-Ynrs

**From The Beat:** Don't you realize that every boy who has this fantasy sees himself as the victor and his "enemy" as the victim. But if every boy thinks this way, then at least half of them (and probably many more) are wrong — sometimes dead wrong! The truth is anyone who plays the game, especially with guns, can end up in that wheelchair, paralyzed, totally dependent on someone else to feed him, clean him, move him, etc. If you think this can't happen to you when you play these deadly games, you're already slipping...

## Street Life

Forced in these streets I was bound to be a thug  
Was a screw-up in school so I had to sell drugs  
I knew it wasn't right, but the money was always tight  
I had all the latest styles  
And that's what brought all the females  
Smashing in my whip, letting that shhh ride  
See me in the streets and I was throwing up my sign  
Just got blurred and now I'm doing time  
The boys wanna hate but they can't stop my shine

-R-Fox

**From The Beat:** You were in the streets doing what you knew was wrong/ And yet you claim to shine, as if selling drugs makes you strong!/ If you do what you do, expect "the boys" to do it too/ And prepare to spend a lot more time in this all-male zoo

## Drama

Man Bra, that ninja fake  
Talk behind yo' back  
Smile in yo' face  
Man, that ninja got cake  
Why you gotta hate  
Why you not gone keep it real  
Yo' girl all on me  
That for real  
So ninja, that you baby mama  
Why she like so much drama

-Lil' Fred

**From The Beat:** Open your eyes and look around/ There's no girls on you 'cause there's no girls to be found/ You can talk about "that ninja" and all that he lacks/ But you can only change yourself, and that's a fact

## Public Execution

Oh my god. Jail! I did what I did. Now I'm stuck with a roommate behind locked doors. I can't be with baby brother holding him tight.

I have a little brother. His name is A'Marie, two months old. He's a special little baby and he just rocks my world. He has my eyes; he has my cheeks and my nose. I just love him so much, and my mom, sister, and step dad.

Common sense would have had be at home instead of jail.

-Ronnie

**From The Beat:** A baby brother needs someone to guide him, to keep him safe — and you need a little brother because he rocks your world. Get yourself out of here and find a way never to come back! (The Beat wants you to choose just one topic to write a lot about. Next time, take a single subject and write as much as you can about it!)

## Hood Shhh

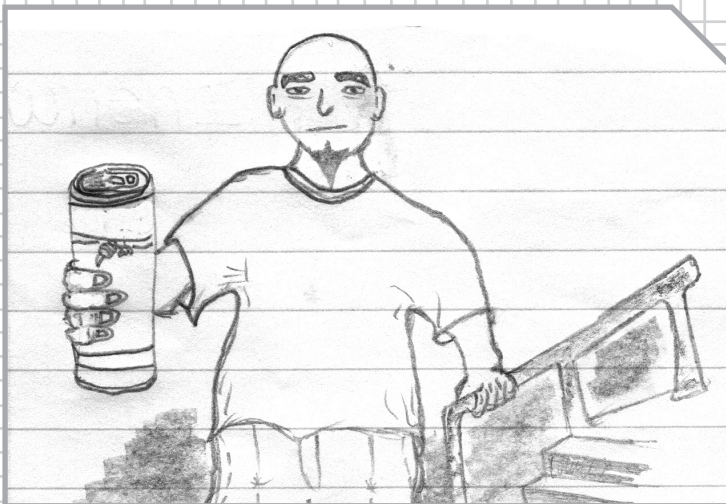
What's poppin' with The Beat? Ant still doing him, waiting patiently to touchdown. But I'm dedicating this to the "Homies" dead and alive!

First off, the squad needs to get out and stay out. Because me and my ninja gone keep it rocking for life, just like we been rocking for life just like we been rocking since way back. We gone keep it lit just like we was before I came in here.

RIP to the homies.

**-Ant**

**From The Beat:** We took out all the references you made to other people because it's not fair to put them on front street. That's up to them. All we can say, ANT, is that you are choosing your homies and the beef over your mother and other family loved ones. Too bad for them!



## No Sexuality Shhh

What's good with The Beat Within? Man, this that young thug right heah mayne, sittin' back doing ma time, ya heard me? Man let me spit somethin' for y'all right quick.

Girl, you's a bad lil' mama; I done grew feelin's an' shhh I wanna hold you tight all night, you the girl I choose to be wit'

I want ma lips to touch yo' lips and kiss deeply from the nights that I miss

I keep ma cake up to buy you make up and buy you new outfits

You's ma mayne chick on some emotional shhh

Even though you lay it down good, it ain't 'bout no sexually shhh

**-Yung Canon**

**From The Beat:** So let's get this straight. You want to hold her all night and kiss her for all the nights we couldn't kiss her, but "it ain't 'bout no sexually shhh." What are we missing?

## My Stop Sign

My stop sign is when I get out and go to this program and get a job. I know it sounds good, but I gotta do it so I get off of probation, and so I can see my family and my homies. But when I get to the block, I still will... y'all know the song.

**-Big Shore**

**From The Beat:** Oh yeah, we know the song. It goes like this... "I just went back to the block and got caught up. The boys picked me up for some little shhh..." Getting off probation is a very important goal, so it's not one you should take lightly, thinking you can avoid consequences you've had to face before. Let those stop signs actually stop you!

## The Good Life

Living the good life, ain't seen the bad life yet, Fresh out the Y on my way to the 'jets.

Betta let 'em know Teddy bouncing back,

Beat seven years on the case, yeah, just like that.

Yes, I love me; yeah, I love Teddy.

They don't wanna free me 'cause the world ain't ready.

I ain't done yet... gotta say I love Young Purp,

We gone be separated for a while, but we gotta make it work.

**-Teddy**

**From The Beat:** Fresh out the Y and straight back to jets?/ How long can you stay free? We're taking bets/ Beating your case, that's great news/ So why play this game that you can only lose?/ We know you don't believe us, Teddy/ But that's because you're just not ready!

## All I See

All I see is my roommate reading his book

All I see is the system controlling my life

All I see is my life getting thrown away, giving it to the damn system when I'm supposed to give my life to my family and myself

All I see is me stuck in this concrete jungle.

But I can't really see my way out...

**-Reynaldo**

**From The Beat:** What do you see as the biggest obstacle to seeing your way out? Why are you "stuck" in your concrete jungle? What would it take to unstuck you?

## My 'Hood

It's crazy out here. Every day it gets grimmer and grimmer.

Me and my ninjas is still out there, though, ready for the funk. We stay ready for anything 'cause you never know what could happen. That's the reason why we stay packing.

**-Weasel**

**From The Beat:** We had to take more than half this piece out because it was nothing more than a threat to kill "them" before "they" kill you, not Beat appropriate. You say that your "ninjas is still out there," but the reality is that fewer and fewer of them are "out there" because more and more of them are in here, in prison, or no longer in the world at all. Grimier and grimmer, indeed!

## Why Don't I Use Common Sense?

I think everyone has commonsense, but not everyone uses it. I know that I shouldn't do something but I still do it. Now I need to learn why I do the things I do without thinking. If I can figure that out, then I will not be locked up.

**-Lionfishy**

**From The Beat:** Are you trying to figure it out? What have you learned about yourself?

## Still Mobbin'

They try to lock me down in this place called jail

But they got another thang coming 'cause I'm raisin' hell

Go ahead, give me an excuse

And one of these staff gone be missing a tooth

They sit there in that booth and tell me what to do

Well forget y'all and everything you stand for

Forget life and all you teach 'cause I don't give a damn

**-Jamil**

**From The Beat:** Do you give a damn about yourself? Do you give a damn about your family? You and your family and the ones feeling the pain and shedding tears. The system is waiting for you to "raise hell" so they can slam you even deeper. Are you going to give them what they want?





## It's Common Sense To Clean The House

When I hear the word "common sense," being more specific comes to mind. Example of common sense would be if your mom see you haven't cleaned the house and she tell you to do it and you don't, and she say don't do it and you keep saying you will and she say no. It's common sense she want you to.

**-Howard**

**From The Beat:** What does your common sense tell you about how you should act while you're inside? What does it tell you about how you should act when you're on the outs?

## Public Executions

The way I see it is "why do they kill people to show that killin' people is wrong?" For some reason, that always run in my head. That don't really make no sense. They took Tookie Williams and many more. RIP to the fallen soldiers.

**-Marlon**

**From The Beat:** There is a poster that asks, "We do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?" We agree with you, it makes no sense at all. Even a child can tell you, "Two wrongs don't make a right."

## Different Views

Man, when a felon like me hear the words "common sense," I think that people got different views on how they think. They might not be stupid to them, even though you think it's smart to you. Even some smart people ain't got common sense, ya dig?

**-G**

**From The Beat:** Can you write about times you resorted to using common sense and it worked out beautifully? What about examples of when you blew it when you chose not to use rational thinking? How about writing about "smart" people who totally lost it by making stupid decisions?

## Lots On My Mind

What's up with The Beat? You know me, keeping it 100%, mayne. I really ain't got too much to say tonight 'cause I got a lot on my mind. I can't wait til I get out man. Shhh is heavy out in them streets.

**-Young Mari**

**From The Beat:** There's really not enough here to publish, but since you have been such a loyal contribute to The Beat, we're publishing it anyway.

## Forget The Beat!

What's up with Beat? Man, to me being on my shhh, I'm like forget The Beat sometimes. They are not helping me. They are just here for the money. They just want me to write shhh about my life. But they do not help me do shhh with my life.

**-Kevin**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry you feel this way about The Beat, Kevin, but we're curious to know just what kind of help you think we can give? What could we do that would help you with your life? One thing we know you got wrong though. Nobody does The Beat for money! All of us could be making 2-3 times more by doing other jobs. Just something to think about.

## Hard Times

It's hard times—ninjas dead or locked up due to ah life of crime  
It's hard times—ninjas on the block, hustlin' nickels and dimes

It's hard times—young girls try to be ladies  
Girls young as thirteen is havin' babies

It's hard times—people can't make it, so they fake it  
It's hard times—the obstacles we go through in life

But it's how you handle it, 'cause some people do it trife

**-Diggz**

**From The Beat:** Good poem! Yes, it is hard times, but is the real problem getting good jobs in the working world beyond the streets? Have your homies and you ever tried to get legit jobs? Even if you start earning small money at first, can you prove that you're reliable, will work hard, learn a lot, get promoted, and maneuver into a job and a career you'd really like, that can earn you good money? Almost everybody has to start on the low rung of any business ladder, prove themselves, and work their way up to achieve their real dreams! You can do it!

## I Have A Stop Sign

My stop sign is when mom look me in the eye and say, "Stop!" with that serious look in her eye. I know when I do something and I get caught, I regret doing what I do so bad. Stealing... that's why I'm here right now when I should be at home with my family.

**-Ronnie**

**From The Beat:** Yes, you should be at home with your family. The question is, how will you act when you do get back with them? If you do the same things that brought you here, then you can expect to be taken from them again... Time to listen to that very important word, "Stop!"

## Common Sense

What's common about common sense, me being from the third world, ya heard me. But yeah, get money. You know it. Take it out you pocket and show it, then throw it. Yeah, it's Tai Mane on them females, aka Mr. Make it rain on them females. But I'm common sense. Why? 'Cause I was born into a world that no one knows about except them gooneys. and that's the third world, ya heard me!

**-Tai Mane**

**From The Beat:** Well, when we read about "the third world" they usually mean the non-developed world, the non-industrialized world, the world of poverty. Is that what you mean?

## Stop Sign

To me, I'm a stop sign 'cause in here ninjas think they so hard. But it's gone be good though. Like a stop sign, I make ninjas stop and think! It's like they get to jail and turn into the Incredible Hulk, but in the streets they turn into straight clowns, for real. But that's it.

**-Mac**

**From The Beat:** You say you make "ninjas" stop and think, but unless you make yourself stop and thinking, your "Stop Sign" isn't worth much.

## Familias

Hey what's up Beat well I ain't feeling these topics so I'm going to be here for a while then they're going to send me to the ranch.

For now I'm just kicking back with my carnales just doing dead time waiting and hoping these fools be failing ranch so this least could go quick so the ones that want to do their time and go to their familias.

Well Beat I ain't going to fail or run from ranch just trying to get to my familia that I miss very much and care about. Well Beat this is it alrato.

-Solo

**From The Beat:** We like your determination. Can you use your time to strengthen your skills and make realistic plans on how you will stay free with your familia that you miss and care about?

## Untitled

I had a talk my lawyer and he told me there was possibility I might get a strike and 6 months in jail. He told me I need a witness or someone that can help the investigators clear my case, so far I only got one person to help me but I have a feeling they're not going to believe him.

If I get a strike that means I only have two more chances and then it's over for me. I'm not really worried about the 6 months because time goes by fast but a strike is something that isn't going to go away with time.

I've been in jail for almost 2 weeks now and it isn't that bad but I starting to miss my home and city streets. It's boring in here so my roommate and I play cards and read to make time go by faster. I would give up a lot of things to get another chance I even turned to god a few times but I soon realized that it working for me.

-Rp

**From the Beat:** It sounds like you're wishing that you had a second chance. Step back a minute and look at the whole picture. First, it's not for sure that you are going to get a strike. Then it sounds to us that you don't want to get a strike. Learn from your mistakes and make sure your decisions don't jeopardize that.

## Part 1

I'm trippin' slowly slipping to the grasp of the streets. It got me creeping through the block with my hand on my heart. My mindset is gone because at a young age I seen my homie get his brains blown. It had me devastated 'cause those foos I hated. Don't have no more time so this part 1 of the life rhyme.

-Lil' Man

**From The Beat:** That event with your homie was tragic and too much for you to have witnessed, and carry. This loss must not take precedence over everything else in your life, however-all the beauty, people you love, and the life you have ahead of you. There is no way to be repaid for this life lost, except to be aware and grateful of all you still have, and to take care of it.

## Pay The Bills

What's up Beat it's Lil' Bones once again just dropping some lines. Well today I'ma write about anything. Well I'm right here with the homies just waiting for my turn to leave to the ranch right now.

I'm in the top ten to leave to the ranch and when I get out I'ma help my jefta pay the bills that I owe while being locked up. I'm also gonna pay back my carnal because he's paying some of my bills, that's why I really have respect for my carnal. Well I'm out til' next time.

-Lil' Bones

**From The Beat:** You're lucky to have family and friends who will help you like that. Can you pay them back from a legit source so you don't have to go through this again?

## The Life

It's been like this for about 2 years, all this time that I've been in here got me thinking that I need to stop this cause I need to be by my new born baby boy's side.

Standing on the corner straight slanging rocks

o shhh here come the cops

so I ran I duck and I hid behind a tree

makin sure they don't see me, and my fat

sack of rocks tell yuh I stuffed 'em

police on my chase I had to pause...

-Young C

**From The Beat:** We had to edit, and hope that you're thinking maybe you have to edit your life in some what the same way as we had to edit this piece. What you're talking about is no place for a baby. Can you re-shape all that street knowledge and those entrepreneurial skills into fathering skills? Your baby needs you to do your best.

## I'm Berto!

I'm Berto and I've committed many sins.

In Berto's room there are two bins.

But that don't matter - I just need a rhyme.

Yea, you're right, I don't know what I'm writing this time.

Or that time, or last time, too.

I should have spelled too like the number two.

The sky is blue and fire is red.

I have no control over my head.

Love is good, love is great.

And it's something I can't hate.

I've got ranch, screw rehab.

I should have got that, they're bad.

If they read this then they will see

that rehab would have been perfect for me.

Hell naw!

Yadada yee yee.

I used to have a roommate

who said this every dayeee.

-Berto

**From The Beat:** We wish you'd gotten rehab, two. It's better than a silly brew, or too. But consider this about the ranch. It's better than an avalanche. It's better than a poison avocado, or two...

## Mi Vida

Wass up once again beat is the homie Elmo, chilling in the hall. Today I'm gonna write about me. Well I made some stupid decision that got me where I am today. It's not much but my life keeps leading in the wrong way.

Sometimes I ask myself 'is this what you really want,' all the drugs I smoke and gang life. It feels right to me, I feel that this is where I belong, but I open my eyes and all I see is me, all alone in a room hella small.

I think back to the day I got in a fight. To tell you tha truth it wasn't worth it. I'm here doing hella time for just a fight. My family stresses about me being here. I've been locked up since 7.7.07 I missed a lot of things being locked up. Things that I would've love to see.

I think damn Elmo, I want to get out chill with my family and the homeboys I think my gang life is never going to change. It's sadly but true, I'm gonna be solid whether they like it or not. I always think about my family and how they always stress about me. I'm sorry familia. I have been doing this far so long I don't even think its wrong anymore.

-Elmo

**From The Beat:** We see that your family means a lot to you and that it bothers you that you cause them stress. You say that you don't even think this is wrong anymore-and also that it wasn't worth it. My question to you is what is it about your life that made you feel all alone and small in your room? Is this cell where "you belong?"

## Never Leave Their Side

The love for my girl and my two month old son got a hold of me. I will never leave their side I know I'm not by their side right now but I'm talking about when I get out I'm never gonna leave their side I love them very much. I would do anything to stay by their side.

**-Young C**

**From The Beat:** We want you to be by their side too. How do you plan to do it? What kind of job could you get, show up for, and work hard at? This is not easy money, but it is the good life because it's all about the ones you love.

## Untitled

What's up wit it Beat this you boy Travieso still up in here. Yes I do think prisons should be racially segregated, because that is the only way they are going to keep the murder rate low.

I don't agree wit the new policy 'cause they've been doin' it one way so long, they can't just switch it up. It's difficult enough to trust fools in the pen as it is, even wit the same races chillin', but imagine if races didn't stick together, who would you trust? But yea I'm outta time so layyyyyte.

**-Garcia**

**From The Beat:** Should trust be based on color? Does being white, black, brown, or even purple matter more than who we are as individuals? Shouldn't we be judged based on our actions and/or personality?

## My Lady

What got a hold of me is my lady. We try to find a girl always like our mothers. My girl made me change my life. If it wasn't for her and my family I would probably be in Y.A.

**-J**

**From The Beat:** Keep a hold of yourself and what you want to do when you get out and you'll see that you'll be showing them gratitude by letting them see who you have become as well.

## My Favorite Cousin

The hardest decision I ever made!! The hardest decision I ever made was "accepting my cousin is dead" because she was my favorite cousin ever! She was only 2 years old I loved her so much.

Some days I wake up thinking I'm going to my aunt's house just to see my favorite cousin. Then I realized that she's not here any more but in my heart she is. So I pray every night before I go to bed to let her know I still love her. So that is the hardest decision I ever made. Late beat.

**-Jr.**

**From the Beat:** Acceptance is something that can be very difficult. We are sorry for the loss of your cousin that was so young. Many times things are out of our control and most can't handle that. We hope you can realize how valuable your own life is, knowing how deeply you feel the loss of your cousin. Care for your life, make good choices. Try hard.

## What Else

My hood got a hold on me. I can't seem to let them go, they won't let me go. I love my hood. So I don't know what else to say. Except just shown some mas firme love alrato beat.

**-Negro**

**From The Beat:** The hood can't keep you really though, just look-it let you get caught up in the system, helped it happen even. What else is important to you about life, about your life? You've been given a chance to figure that out.

## There's No Place Like Home

I just want to say that I'm tired of coming here. I think now I'm realizing that this place is not the place for me at all. I'm going to the ranch so I have enough time to get my mind back on track.

I'm tired of hurting my mom. I love her so much. I want to say, I'm sorry, mom. You never have given up on me. Through what I've done, you're still there to support 100%. I thank you for that and I want us to have a better relationship when I get out. Please pray for me. I love you, mom. I miss you. Be home soon!

**-Tt**

**From The Beat:** This isn't the place for you! So how are you going to make sure you don't come back? Once you're on the outs, you've got to be strong and make the right decisions, so you can stay out. That way, you'll be there for your mom 100% just like she's been there for you.

## Keep It Cool

What's up Beat this is lil MAN here again I was out for three weeks. They just hate on me because I keep it gangsta, but this time when I get out I'm going to keep it cool. I'm going to be la in march. I shouldn't got more months I had a job at Target and I was doing good. Sh\*t happens well gots to go alratoz.

**-Lil' Man**

**From The Beat:** Things do happen, but did you do anything to add to the situation and land you back in juvie? Congratulations on the job. Now you know you can get another one. Piece it together and do "keep it cool," so, much as we like you—we don't see you again so soon.

## Getting Out

What's good with it Beat. This be your boy, Young Dee.

I am gonna talk about when I get out. When I get out I'm gonna start fresh because I'm 16 now and wanna start fresh.

I'm gonna start going to APA earn my cred, just tryna graduate high school, stop doing what I was doing before I got locked up. And I'm just gonna start listening to my moms and stop disrespecting her. 'Cause that ain't a thing to do.

Well, if my piece makes it in The Beat I won't be able to see it, 'cause I'm finna be out. But if I don't, it's koo. Well anyways, I'm just gonna do good and stay out of trouble and do what I gotta do for me not to come back. And just do my house arrest for 30 days and go to APA. for a whole year without messing up!

Well Beat, it was nice writing in The Beat. Hopefully I don't come back. Well, I'm out.

**-David**

**From The Beat:** We're glad you've enjoyed writing for The Beat. You can follow us 'on line', if you have access to a computer. ( [www.thebeatwithin.org](http://www.thebeatwithin.org) ) Thanks for writing.

## The Hardest Decision I Ever Made

Well Hey was up Beat this is your homie Monstro once again writing today's topic. Well today's topic I chose the hardest decision I ever made.

Well my hardest decision I ever made was hitting the pipa. Damn that was my hardest decision that I made because I didn't want to do that drug. That drug was the worst drug I ever did. Well that's it arato, gots to go until next time.

**-Monstro**

**From The Beat:** It's good that you can say it in a past tense. Stay strong and don't result to those measures again if you can. Do you know now why you did it even though you knew you didn't want to?



## If Only I Could Change That

Was up Beat? Me, nothing just chillin'. Something that has gotten hold of me is the fact that I am far away from my house and that I make my mom cry, I want that to stop.

I look at myself in my cell and think what I would be doing if I was at my house right now. I miss my family, especially my mom. I hate to see and hear my mom break down in tears with terror on her beautiful face. If only I could change that. Have you ever gotten a thought like that?

**-Luis**

**From The Beat:** Many individuals have changed, you are taking things in a very positive direction. You're analyzing your actions and thinking about the effects of them on others. From here it's up to you if you choose to take action to prevent further harm to those you love including yourself.

## Special Day

Hey what's the bizzniz Beat? Well this is that one and only Elmo coming at you live from that one and only unit that you love to hate. Well I ain't feeling those topics tonight so I've decided to write about my very special day today.

Why is 8/7/08 a special day you ask? Because it's my birthday and honestly I had hella fun kickin' it with my boys that I ain't with right now, but you already know I got love for you bro and we gonna kick it when we get out. But yeah well this is where I got to cut it so I'mma get at you guys later ight.

**-Elmo**

**From The Beat:** Happy Birthday Elmo. Hopefully you made the best of it.

## Vanessa

Vengeful  
Addicted  
Needy  
Error  
Stupid  
Seventeen  
Arrested

**-Vany**

**From The Beat:** Did you know that a poem like this is called an 'acrostic'? We urge you to get help for your addiction. You might have done a stupid thing, but you clearly are not stupid. Write on.

## My Hood

Well my hood always got my back and when something happens they're there. I grew up in my hood, we are a big family. Every time I need someone to go to, I go to my hood. When I need somewhere to sleep I have a house. When I need money or food I'll call one of the homeboys and they will hook me up.

My hood got a hold on me because I don't wanna leave. I love my hood there's many reasons why I love my hood. They're too long I am not going to talk about a few back. We have love for each other and no one could keep us down. Well that's what I had to say about this to all the homeboys doing time stay up and don't get caught sleepin' alrato.

**-Lil' Man**

**From The Beat:** That kind of a family is good to have. We hope that one of those many reasons that you love your hood is because they come to visit you here and that if you decided to get your life straight they would support you 100 percent.

## By My Side

November 4, 2007 was the day of the pinky promise we made. You're the reason I smile the entire day. You should know that I'm real when I say; I love you always and forever, and always when I look into your eyes I know our love is real.

Remember you could call me any time you're feeling down. No girl could ever love me the way you do. Why am I gonna hold you down cause I need you by my side. It's me and you forever, we were meant to find each other. When we hold hands, we hold them tight. I love when I look into my special someone's eyes. Someone who completes my life, you were the one I chose of all those other females who I'll never change. I put that on my best, just to stay holding you in my arms, it feels so right when I hold you tight cause baby being with you feels so right.

Every lil' second I live I think about you. How we met was destiny. Our love is real and true. Tell me what I'm supposed to do if I don't have you here. I wanna be the one who is there through the years. I wanna be the one does away with your tears and replaces them with happiness. I wouldn't trade you for the world. You're all I need. You're the girl that make me feel so free. I love you with all my heart and till the day I die. I truly need you baby you're the light to my life.

I know one day fo sho you're gonna be my wife so just hold on tight because I'm always gonna treat you right. Until the day I die Imma try and give you the world. If loving you is wrong I don't wanna be right. I can't imagine how my life would be without you by my side. I can't even explain how I felt if I didn't need you girl there wouldn't be a smile on my face. Every lil' thing you do is special to me. We were meant to be forever truly agree. And I know we were destiny I see it in your eyes. Every time you smile I can't explain what you make me feel inside. I love you always and forever.

**-Thief**

**From The Beat:** Your words show others what it is that you feel for her. Keep writing and you'll see that it makes the distance feel smaller. Don't forget to value that when you do have her close to you. We hope you don't risk being away from her in the future.

## Silly Of Me

What's up with The Beat?

Just to let you know, this your girl Lina.

Well, today I'm gonna write about my day. Today is Thursday. So I haven't been having a good day. I been so freaking stressed out. I got all my shhh taken away from me and even mental health didn't clear me.

What I mean by that is the staff and mental health didn't trust me to keep all my belongings. They all thought I was really trying to hurt myself. I was pissed off, but still that's my choice. If I don't want to live then they should just let me be. Because even if it's true, that's me. They ain't feeling my pain or they won't ever understand what I've gone through or whatever I'm going through. I ain't trying to throw no guilt trips at no one, but I think that really should be up to me, or not. So yeah, I had a little incident today.

Okay, enough about that. Thank you all for caring about me. To all in here that know me, keep your head up and stay true. Late.

**-Lina**

**From The Beat:** Everyone goes through times when they feel like it's all just too much. Sometimes when you're in the middle of feeling like that, you can't see clearly, and you need someone to help get you through to a time when things look better. Like it or not, the System is one of those "someones." But it doesn't have to be the only one. Try talking to your friends and family about the things that are getting you down. The people who care about you want to see you get through.

## About A Gurl

Ay Beat this ur boy 'snook snook' still doing my thang posted up like a stop sign. I wasn't feelin' the piece so I thought I might just throw something else out.

I stay posted up like a stop sign  
flyin' on m grind, livin' doin' time  
neva actin' a fool and rockin' my game wit truth  
I'm as high as a bird concentrate on the word  
an eye for an eye is what I heard  
you see I wear my sword like a girdle  
covered by my shell don't make me feel like a turtle  
every day I wake up  
to wake up, get stoked up and roughed up  
Waitin' for tha day I could go home.  
loungin' in my cell, two mo months till I leave this hell  
thinking boutta girl that's so sweet and lookin' so mean  
her I hold through the day and in my nightly dreams  
every now and then I see her, so sweet brah  
oh life seems so dull but when I see your smile all falls  
all I wanna do is hold you in my arms just let down your guard  
I'll put you at ease cause I mean for you my heart is what I'd disarm  
sick in my bones like egg yolk your vibe oozes me, a natural it's all me  
and u know I want to get at you lady  
you got my heart running laps and my hormones going crazy.  
Your easy energy steadily swades me, I ain't afraid  
wit the curls you vibrant and you got me pumped  
get me jumped...ya jump started like a car charger  
I'm a mechanic ready to repair your heart, just take your seat  
I keeps it real cause I'm trye, just read behind the lines I don't hide  
this the day true love is what I truly find  
something so divine, fine, pure like a fresh fine-vine-wine  
if fate answers cupids calls then I could be yours and you could be all mine,  
just imagine I be holdin' you tight  
wit those glitters in the sky as I look deep into your eyes  
to see that glimmer shine, what a beautiful sight.

**-Snook Snook**

**From The Beat:** Nice flow and rhymes, we did have to edit. The Beat can't be used to communicate...you gotta do that live in person. Where you gonna go with these skills when you're released?

## Change

I thought I would never change, but I can truly say I have changed. Because of all this I sit here and think, what if I never got to go back home 'till I'm in my thirties or forties?

That's my whole life, I'm a smart person, I want just one more chance to prove I have changed, I have dreams I want to accomplish, I have people that care and love me out there.

So when you pick up that knife, think twice. Do you really want to spend half your life in these walls that you can't escape from...?

**-Changed One**

**From The Beat:** To change from someone who doesn't think about where their actions lead them (like straight into the arms of the System) into someone who does think about it is a real transformation of character. That's what "growing up" really is. Now how are you going to apply that wisdom when you get out, so that you can accomplish those dreams you have?

## Birthdays Here!

What Beat is me freshmen. Birthdays in here suck. My boy Elmo, my brother Bugzy and I spend our birthday here today 8/7/08. It's Elmo's birthday today, HAPPY BIRTHDAY Elmo. Well it sucks to spend birthday here because we can't do shhh here.

If we weren't here we would go to parties, drink, go downtown, get in trouble, and the next day we wouldn't remember what happen last night. But I'm here and we can't do all that shhh but the one thing we can do is PARTY IN MY ROOM!

Yea we make the best times in here, we are all together for our birthday, the three brothers. Well later Beaters one more thing happy birthday Bugzy and Elmo late!!!!

**-Freshmen**

**From The Beat:** Happy Birthday to the three of you! We hope that you look forward to many more birthdays, just not in here though. Did you take some good stock of your life so far, and make some serious plans for your future? Don't let the years disappear.

## The Hardest Decision I Ever Made...

The hardest decision I've made was to say I am sorry to my mom. I really thought it was a hard decision to make because in my past 18 years of life, I've made my mom really suffer. Alrato.

**-E.**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes the things that should seem so simple to say or do are the things that take the biggest effort in doing. How did it feel after you let your mom know you were sorry? Did you really mean it?

## The Outs Got a Hold of Me

What's got a hold on me from being on the outs; from seeing my family, from seeing my girl? All I get is letters from them.

It's crazy en este lado but this is how we do it and this is what I ask for the system to keep me lock up. No one put me in this place but my choices. My choices that I made are what hold me back orra ... pues this vato is out alratos.

**-El Grumps**

**From The Beat:** We salute that you can see that it's your own actions that brought you here. One too many times we see individuals that blame the system or others for their actions. We ask you now will you continue to do the kind of things that brought you in here now that you know what it's like?

## Common Sense

What's crackin' Beaters. It's Gumbie, coming from the unit where kids think they can fly - Ha Ha. But about common sense... a time when I needed it the most I would have to say was when I was on the run. Because it's basically obvious that I would come back, and doing the shhh I was doing, I'm surprised I made it that long. I would always tell myself to kick back if I wanted to be out, but I was too busy doing it live, and when I came back I was hella mad at myself. But why be mad because it's "common sense", right?

Well yeah, that's just a little time when I needed common sense the most. Well - to the homeboys reading and planning on running - I can't stop you from doing what you do, but remember to have common sense. With that said, I'm gonna cut this short. With much love and respect...

**-Gumbie**

**From The Beat:** We're trying to figure out where the common sense kicked in, in your adventures. And by the way - what's your definition of 'common sense'?

## You Learn From Your Mistakes

Today I am sitting here with thoughts going through my mind.

Regret is flowing through my veins.

I'm not going to blame anybody else but myself.

It's true what they say, "you do learn from your mistakes".

I sure did.

I regret a lot, but now I know I got fifteen more weeks to go, then I'm ghost.

I can't wait.

I miss being home, I miss my mom, everything.

I'm 18 and most of it has been me being locked up.

Time seems like every second is more like an hour.

I'm just keeping my head up.

Mama didn't raise no fool, gotta keep a smile on, chin up, and just do my time.

And the most important, not let these females get to me.

Most of them are cool. Nobody is gonna break me.

Well Beat, I been writing for the past two hours.

Much love to my little brother. Keep your head up.

Just remember - I'm always here for you. Love and respect.

**-Loyalty**

*From The Beat: So, you'll be out in time to celebrate a new you for a new year. You sign your piece with the word "Loyalty". Just remember - loyalty, by itself, is only half the picture. It matters what you are loyal to. It does sound to us as if you know that.*

## Not Supportive Of Public Execution

Executions should not be public because some people, they're not OK with executions-- because they think that the government doesn't have the right to take a life away. It's the same as if the government is committing murder.

I think that execution should not be use on prisoners.

Not every person has right, the government should not kill people just because society said yes they should. They should give him life instead of killing people because the government can kill prisoners, without any problem.

**-Stich**

*From The Beat: Your statement "...because the government can kill prisoners, without any problem" is very interesting and a good point. If the government or society's big institutions decide to kill people for the wrong reasons or for any reason, who can stop them? Yes, sometimes it is easy for the government to wrongly kill or abuse and we don't have the power or the speed to stop it, or do we?*

## A Haiku

Karma is waiting

For you to do bad or good

It will repay you

-A Wise Arctic Fox

From The Beat: What will you do if the ice melts, o wise fox?

Two Haikus

Darkness consumes me

Its icy touch tears my soul

Leaving me in pain

Life is but a dream

Longed for by those who've lost it

How I envy them.

**-A Wise D**

*From The Beat: Ooo... not bad, which means - good. But tell us, do you really envy the dead? Here's the closest we can come to remembering a line from a poem we read not too long ago, though we can't recall the poet's name: ...they say that in heaven, every third thought is of earth.*

## My Hero, My Best Friend, My Mother

I love you more than you'll ever know. Words can never explain what you mean to me. I thank God that I have you in my life. I truly am blessed. How did I get so lucky to have you. You never stopped caring, never gave up on me. We went through some struggles but still you were there. I'm so thankful for that.

Mom, I truly don't know what or where I would be without you. I've done so much things. Words of regret flutter through my mind. I found every reason why you should have given up on me. But you still were there with open arms. Mom you turn my frowns into smiles. You give me strength when I feel like I'm falling. You're there to catch me, hold me, and tell me everything is going to be ok. Mom, there's no way I can ever explain to you how much I love you, how much I care, I'm thankful you never gave up on me. You're my best friend, I can truly talk to you about "anything" and you never judge me, just give me the advice I need, and you still love me unconditionally. You support me in any decision I make. Mom, how can I ever tell you I'm so thankful for everything.

Thank you, thank you, I cherish every moment, you're my hero, my best friend, my every reason, my mother, I love you. No more tears, I'm a big girl now, but if I do cry I know you'll be there to catch every tear drop. I'll always be mommy's Baby girl. One love one heart.

**-Christina**

*From The Beat: Cut this one out too. Tell us in your next piece what your mom does for you and your family. Give us examples of how awesome of a lady she is!*

## What's Got Hold Of You?

The two things that have got a hold of me is alcohol and being locked up.

**-Locked Up**

*From The Beat: Does one come after the other? Are they completely separate? What can you do to get a hold of yourself and not have other factors control you?*

## It's Just A Word

Sorry is just a word that I know you hate. I've told you this so many times and your answer is "yea, sorry, that ain't gonna do nothing." I know you don't want me to apologize. You want me to show you that I'm actually going to change, do what I got to do. You said I needed to stop listening to others talk shhh. Sorry for saying sorry, although sorry is the only word I know. Never thought how hard this word would be to explain to you. It all came from the day I arrived in your arms, and how I had to say sorry.

From the beginning I knew I had to say sorry, sorry to cause you so much pain. I'm sorry for not being what you wanted me to be, or dreamed of what you wanted me to be. I'm sorry for promising you that I would stay out of trouble and ruining that promise. I'm sorry for getting close to gangs, drugs, and violence, but I felt that was my only solution. I know how much you hate sorry, but this time I've gotten into a bigger mess, one that no one at all can get me out of but myself. I will no longer say the word that you hate most.

The time has come for me to stop doing what I was doing and get over the past. My point is that I love you and miss you so much, it's unexplainable. I love you mom.

**-Beatrice**

*From The Beat: Your problem with the word 'sorry' reminds us of what a famous Russian writer once wrote, with tongue in cheek. He said: try not to think about the white bear in the forest. Or something close to that. We're 'sorry' we don't have the exact quote.*



## Within Me

The monster  
The beast  
Within me  
Feels the beat of my pulse  
Pain is a drug  
I don't give hugs or love  
No passway tickets  
No freeway rides  
This is no lie  
I can't prevent  
What I found inside  
I love my ninjas  
The ones I'd kill for  
I realized I can't change  
So I'm back to my life  
This hectic life  
The thing I'll never hide  
So within me is a monster  
That has so much power  
I cannot hide  
Leave behind  
Not on my mind  
I love the rush  
Some say I'm crazy  
Not me, my split personality  
It's not me it's him  
It's a monster in reality

**-Lunatic**

**From The Beat:** So, you recognize your dark side and in this poem, you introduced this side as separate from your good personality. May we ask if you are able to communicate with this side of your personality? Do you feel that having the good and the bad side of yourself disconnected helps or inhibits you in life?

## No Stop Sign

There is no stop sign when you live your life in the fast lane. So, for me, there are no stop signs. Just trying to make it to where I'm trying to get to, as quick as I can. It's all about me not stopping for nothing or anybody unless it gotta do with family.

Other than that, I ain't stopping for nothing. That's just the way I grew up, too fast and living life fast so fast that ain't nothing stopping me.

**-Forget stopping!**

**From The Beat:** The analogy of the stop sign works well with you life style in the fast lane. It's because you're view is narrowly focused on yourself- you write as if you are the only person riding in a lane. There are tons of others around you living similarly or differently than you. Without a "stop sign," what happens when you collide with another? You did not mention the stop sign you have for hurting your family.

## Friend

Today, I'm going to write about my roommate, He's like a radio station, he sings 24/7. If he's not singing he would try to speak Spanish but I don't understand him because it sounds like he is saying the words in a different language. I just say yes, so he could be quiet. He's sitting right next to me saying some random stuff...he needs help fast.

I think he needs to be on the next level-- for no reason. He makes me sick to my stomach I want to throw up, but I hold it in so he won't feel bad. Well there's not enough space. Until next time.

**-Hector**

**From The Beat:** You are very fortunate to have a roommate who shares your sense of humor and can tolerate your beginning attempts to write comedy. Next time, we would love to read something hilarious from you, but using other inspirations besides your friends' habits. :-)

## A Simple Task

I think common sense means to have basic knowledge. Like you know what's right from wrong.

An example is where you know it's your curfew and you're on probation and you see a cop. If you have common sense you would walk a different way so you don't get pulled over. But if you don't have common sense then you will let the cop see you. That's basically what "common sense" is, knowing how to handle a simple task or situation with knowledge you have.

**-Benzo**

**From The Beat:** Common sense is also knowing you have a curfew and not violating it!

## What I'm Gonna Do

What's up with The Beat! It's yo boy Art and I want to tell you what I want to do when I get older.

When I get older I want to get my baby momma and I know that we are going to be together forever and ever, but what I'm really trying to say is have a good time job, stay out of jail, and have a little boy someday and live the good, like you know, because. Do it right guys, and when you get older do it. It will all work out for you. Help your mom because I know that I am going to do that. And have a good, good car - doing it the right way, with my own home and my own fambam. Alright, I'm gone.

**-Arthur**

**From The Beat:** Before you do you have to dream. And doing makes the dream come true. Are you a doer? We hope so.

## Common Sense

When I hear the words common sense, what comes to mind is when the stove is hot, don't touch it, kind of like instinct. I think common sense also means something like, "obvious."

**-Pope**

**From The Beat:** OK. Try taking your writing a bit further next time. You have time to step up and teach, why waste it sitting in the classroom? Opportunities like The Beat are quite special.

## Damn Those Days

Well, what's crackin'?

Well, my sister just had a baby, and I was there when she had my niece, Mary-Jane. When I first saw her I had barely came out the ranch. She was the most beautiful lil bebesita I had ever seen.

Right now Mary-Jane is 8 months and I feel hella bad because I'm going to go to the City of Angels now, to do time - 18 months! I'm her auntie and I'm not gonna be able to see her take her first steps, or hear her say her first words, or see her grow out of being a baby. I'm not gonna see her until she's 2 years old! Could you believe that!

When I found out the news that I wasn't gonna see her for that long, I'm not even gonna lie man, I started straight up balling.

Hopefully she remembers me, 'cause if she doesn't, then there's gonna be problems between my carnala and me - for not showing my niece at least some flickas of mine to remind her that she's got an auntie that hella loves her. Well, I'm out for now... Alratos. Yours truly.

**-Claudia**

**From The Beat:** Hey, don't get worked up about imaginary problems. We're sure your sister will keep the love alive you have for your neice. You can write sweet notes to her. When she's grown up, they'll be among her favorite possessions.

## What I Think About The Hall

I think that juvenile hall is helpful in some ways because it makes you think about the mistakes that you might have made in order to be in a juvenile hall like this but also I think probation is bad because sometimes when you get caught doing something real small like past curfew they make it a big deal and lock you up.

Also, once you're in the system, it's hard to get out, and they may violate you for almost anything, which makes you look bad in court. And you can get more charges or even more time of probation, and especially when you're in gang probation, you have more to worry about like, being careful about who you are chilling with or what you wearing or even the area that you're in.

Well that's what I think about probation and being in the system. I think they should be easier because it makes me think that sometimes they just release you and let you free to catch you again and put you back in this place.

Also, I really don't think they care about you; their job is just to mess with you.

-S

**From The Beat:** We agree that the probation system has become more complex to the point that it is moving away from reforming a person who has committed a crime and becoming a series of obstacles. Knowing all that, how can you resolve these issues for yourself?

## Your Son

I want to tell you a story about a little kid who has dreams of growing up. This kid has a queen named mom. She has always done what she can to take care of me and everybody else in her life. I think folks should start showing some gratitude if they do have a mom because I know there are people who don't have a mom and want a mom.

Anyways, I am just a kid who has love for everyone, wants to be loved by everyone, so this kid is showin' love for himself, his family, and friends. Oh yeah, I want to make a shout out to my sis and bro and especially my mom, from your son.

-Stevie

**From The Beat:** Thank you for reminding us to show and feel gratitude for the people who love us and care for us. We ask you and all your peers, what happens if a person shows and lives in a grateful way, everyday? How will that change a person? How will that change their environment?

## Not The Life

Living in a cell,  
On the real...ain't the life  
I've got to get my money  
Fade away ballin' right  
My priorities are major,  
It's too bad I'm stuck in jail  
Ain't no love for player, 'cause nobody posting bail  
I know my destiny's showing nothing but achievement  
A young black man with a mind on a reason  
For living life to fullest, I am never on empty  
I see you others stalling, your eyes filled with envy  
You can never be me; I don't want to be you  
I only do me because I know I'm still true  
Too many fake people putting on acts like they friends  
You've got to see through all traits, before you are mistaking

-A-M

**From The Beat:** What is your destiny, exactly? You mention making money, but we wonder if you would elaborate. Also, why do you think others envy you? Why do you think they want to be you?

## No Stop Sign, But It's Coming

I'm sorry to say, but I have no stop signs. I always did what I wanted. Know my actions would send me to jail, but I still do it. I just can't stop myself. I see my parents cry, but I just do what I do. Even when I promise them and promise myself I will do good, I just end up screwing up.

Now I'm here in juvy locked up again. All my family and loved ones are hurting. This is causing me great pain too.

I'm gonna try to make my own stop sign. I'm gonna get it into my head that if I screw up again I'm hurt my loved ones and taken away from my girl and child! I'ma try to get that in my head. I really want to change to be there for my family. They deserve better than all this pain I cause.

I can see it now. Ten years from now when I get out. Everything will be perfect.

-Inthavong

**From The Beat:** You are learning and thinking about others whom you love so much, your family.

## Death Penalty

My thoughts about the death penalty are that people should get the death penalty. There are a lot of sick people in this world, like people who rape little girls and then take their lives so they don't get caught. And people who do all kinds of sick shhh, they too deserve the death penalty. I think if people want to see the person die then I think that is OK.

-Rico

**From The Beat:** We appreciate your thoughts on this issue.

## My Daughter Is My Stop Sign

My stop sign is my daughter. I could be mad at the whole world but when my daughter is in my view, she brightens up my day. She's the only person that can stop me from doing bad.

-Taz

**From The Beat:** Get working on bettering yourself and becoming successful. Your baby girl needs you home, not locked up.

## Be Faithful

So you think you got it bad  
How about the thousands of kids  
Who ain't got nothing but you don't see them  
They are all sad and they get full  
With only a little something  
Even if they don't eat the whole day,  
They don't get mad  
Still, you see all these kids dance, play and sing

So you think your life sucks  
How about these little babies with  
No place to sleep  
And they don't blame it on bad luck.  
All they have are the happy moments  
While they dream  
And yet we still shooting at foes not giving a care  
But they don't complain about it, so it seems.

-E

**From The Beat:** This is a smart idea to juxtapose your peers in the hall with the hundreds of thousands of youth around the world who are impoverished and living daily with little food, no running water, etc. Is your message to your peers about humility, gratitude, or inner strength?

## I'm Out

I'm finally leaving to Colorado to get my program over with.

Today I saw my brothers, so that made my day. I'm nervous about leaving tomorrow but when I get there I'm going to make the best of it.

My grandma told me she would be really proud of me if I completed my program, so that's what I'm going to do. I know it hurts my mom and grandma a lot, every time I get locked up. So this time I'm going to try to stay out. I just want to make my grandma proud. That's my goal.

Hopefully I'll be back in California for Christmas to visit.

Well Beat, I'm going to cut this short. To all - stay up. Late!

**-Corina**

**From The Beat:** Do it first for yourself. And it will then follow that your mom and grandma will be very, very proud of you. We're sure of it. Do well in your program. Write to us.

## Family Is A Stop Sign, But Other Times I Avoid Them

I got a lot of stop signs. One is Moms, I think about how it would effect her being a single parent hardly paying rent for one room in a house full of strangers.

Two, is a couple family members that's behind bars or underneath the dirt, but most of the time I don't see those stop signs. I go right past 'em without any thought, I was blind. Never really paid any attention to those signs until I had to suffer the consequences for my actions. I past all em stop signs because I got away with a lot of dirt. Those signs never really came to my mind till now.

**-Jerm**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes the most obvious stuff is the stuff we overlook the easiest. Think about all of the things you have and the people that are depending on you. Do you really have nothing to lose? And do you really have no one to protect?

## Execution: Certain kind of people

I think that there are certain kinds of people who should be executed and some that shouldn't-- kind of labeling: rapists, murderers, and molesters.

For me, the worst kinds of people are those who go around raping people and molesting little girls. I think those are the people who should be executed.

**-Pope**

**From The Beat:** It is very interesting that your view and many others on this topic is that people who rape and molest little girls should be put to death. We understand that sexual violence on young girls is about the worst thing one can imagine in regards to the horrors in this world, but we are very curious as to why you do not think these criminals deserve to be rehabilitated? Are they a lost cause? Why?

## My Mom Sign

Hey what's up coming straight from the max. My stop sign is my mom because I love my mom and she thinks I'm an angel. But that's when I'm at my pad, but when I opened my front door and take a step outside I'm a different person.

When I see fools I take flight on them, but if I'm with my mom I wouldn't do it out of respect for her and I wouldn't want her to see my other side. But if I'm alone or with my homie that's all bad for them.

**-StuDds**

**From The Beat:** Youngster, control yourself!! How bad do you want your freedom? DO you really want to make your life that much more miserable? And what about your mom? Do you want her to visit you in the system because you couldn't keep your hands and rage to your self. Get help before you destroy your mother. She deserves better!

## Public Execution: Good or Bad

Public execution can be good or bad! I think it could be bad because people would be seeing their loved ones getting killed and that's just not right. I also think, in a way, maybe it could be good to show people reality of committing crimes. But for family or friends seeing those loved ones getting killed, that's just wrong.

**-DJ Stylez**

**From The Beat:** You mention that public executions are most disturbing for family and loved ones. Are you pointing to the fact that being respectful of a person's life or death is connected to respecting his/her family and loved ones? If so, then we would like to ask if you would extend that respect to all members of society.

## Express Myself

Hey Beat, what's crackin'? Me, I'm cool, waiting to go to the Ranch.

Right now I'm not really feeling the topics, so I'm going to take time and talk about my week, you know "express myself."

Well, on Sunday I got a visit from my mom. She came back from her vacation with my brother and sister. They went to go visit my dad.

Last year during the summer, I was locked up and they were in Mexico, going to the Pyramids. Now I'm in here for the summer again and they're here, I don't know where, enjoying themselves.

My sister told me straight up "just because of you being locked doesn't mean we can't enjoy ourselves! That's messed up but it's true, you know."

Well my mom told me that they came back safe (good thing) and that they left our dog over there. That's why my mom is going back for her, probably after my court date.

I'm almost done with High School. I only need like 20 credits to graduate and I barely became a senior so that's a good thing. I only got to do a few books and I'm done. I'm kinda lagging on my work, but I'll finish it.

I also built a car model for this unit. It's a Mustang and a Fire Lord a '68. I have to do my autobiography and family tree for the Ranch. Right now basically I'm just chilling. When I leave to the Ranch, I'll probably be in the hall for 10 months and 6-8 months at the Ranch. I'll be almost 18 when I get out. See now, I'll feel better just expressing myself. That's good. Well Beat stay up. Alright then stay up. I'm out. Alrato.

**- Victor**

**From The Beat:** That's our purpose! That's what exactly we want. We want you to feel comfortable and release what's bothering you, what makes you happy, sad and proud. As we can see, you are about to graduate. That's a good thing. Finish your program and shift the gears to the next level, college. There are so many beautiful things waiting for you when you get out. You already made us proud of your effort, now it's to make your parents proud of you getting out of here and taking education seriously. Can you do that?

## My Stop Sign Is My Family

My stop sign is my family. Every time, I'm about to do something stupid, I think about the consequences. I think about what my family would say about me. Also, I think about if my sister is gonna do the same thing I did to get locked.

I'm her example and I'm a bad one. So the next time you are going to do something bad think about what other people would say about you.

**-Mariguas**

**From The Beat:** It's not too late to set the right example to your sister. When we are young, we all make mistakes and learn from them. We're not perfect. Use your experience to make yourself a better person. Show that you can make it out of here and be the person you desire to be. It's not possible. It's all on you.



## Thoughts On Public Execution

My thought on execution is they can have it but to people who deserve it not the people that don't. But I don't think they should have it so everybody can watch it though cause that's kinda messed up to let people watch a person getting killed and then having fun watching it.

I wouldn't watch it 'cause what if the person that is getting killed was someone in your family or that you love and everybody gets to see it, where you're worried and they're all happy to see him die.

I think if it was public it would be the same, just different because people get to watch you die.

If I was the one getting executed I wouldn't want people to see me. It will not have a big impact cause murder and crimes will never stop people. We're going to do it still no matter what, that's how life is. It wouldn't have that much effect on me cause it don't really matter to me because it will be the same for me no matter if they get killed in front of people or behind the walls. So that's what I think about public execution.

**-J-Fydah**

**From the Beat:** You make some very good points about the way we treat other people. When we can hide behind a government, people are willing to do terrible things. But who is really hurting the family? The government performing the execution, or the man who committed the crime knowing execution was a possibility?

## My Poem To You

Roses are red  
Violets are blue  
Cupcakes are sweet  
And so as you  
Since I've been locked up, it been thinking  
Of you, day and night I give my heart to  
You,  
I lay down in my bed reminiscing about  
The romantic times me and you had,  
but now I am glad to have where I want.  
Baby, I want you to know please do go.  
My heart is for you, for you to keep  
And never leave, I feel like a kid in  
My first dream, I felt you in my blood stream.

**-Mariguas**

**From The Beat:** We like your poem. But, you should know that we are not about just writing poems to another person. The Beat Within has a different purpose and you know it. For the next time, we would like a poem about your life or about your views that you have towards life.

## The Wait

Well I'm still waiting to go to group home I been waiting to go since June 3 2008. Man I been in and out all this year, I just want to do good man I wanted to go to the ranch and do 6-8 but now I'm doing 18 months out of county and they think I'm going to run because I ran and cut my EMP off three times.

Well to everyone out there why do you guys do what you do? Why do you guys get locked up, is it fun to you guys? Why do you guys like to hurt your family?

I hate being in here because it hurts my grandmom.

Well to all that's in here stay up and don't run from the programs. You guys do just do what you got to do so you can be at home and be with family.

**-Sleepy**

**From The Beat:** You ask some very good questions. We think it's very tempting to think that we have our own choices and no one else gets affected. But every choice we make for ourselves is a decision for everyone that cares about us. That's not to say it isn't your choice, but it's a reason to do the right thing.

## Jeanne's Most Finest

Theres a girl that lives on my avenue.

This girl stole my heart and I didn't even know her name.

One day while I was kicking it at my hood I decided to take a sit on some stairs.

While I sat there the girl from upstairs went to throw the trash outside.

She was looking fine and when she walked back up the stairs

she looked at me and gave me one of those smiles like she was joking

so I started throwing some game.

She fell for it and I made her my hyna the same day.

I got locked up the next day.

I was thinking about her last night so I decide to write about her.

She doesn't even know I'm locked up so that sucks.

Hopefully when I get out she still lives there so I can spend some time with her

but for now I'll just call her Jeanne's most finest.

**-S**

**From the Beat:** We hope you find her when you get out, and we hope she thinks about you the way you do about her. Good luck, man. Remember, if you are to stay out, you need to handle your business!

## A Ranch Thing

Me and my friends are going to the Ranch and now we're in this unit together. Now we have to write until they call us to go to the Wright Center. All of my friends are going to the Wright Center except one of my friend's, he's going to go to James Ranch.

**-Phaing**

**From The Beat:** We hope you all help each other to make it out of the system with a graduation certificate from the program. Good luck to you and your friends.

## Not Using My Head

A lot of people have common sense because people ain't gonna do something bad when they know it is common sense. An example is when I went speeding down the street hitting 100 mph on a school zone, and we braked and we crashed, broke my leg, but it was cool!

**-Negro**

**From The Beat:** At least, it was just a crashed car and a broken leg. Can you imagine the type of situation you could be facing if you had killed any innocent child? Big time trouble! A murder case! Be careful, that's not fun.

## When I get out

Damn, it seems like I ain't never gonna get out of here. I only been in here two months, but there isn't any sign of me getting' out anytime soon.

I want to get out and kick it wit' my homeboys. I want to kick back at the pool. I'm start tattooing right when I get out for some of my homeboys. I miss my homeboys.

I hella miss my lady Selena. I'll take care of you and do things right when I get out, I promise. I was going too fast, once I started making that money, I didn't wanna stop.

When I get out, I'm just gonna kick back, and be cool. Well I'm out.

**-Reaper**

**From The Beat:** We hope you kick back and take things easy when you get out or else you will be here writing complains about not having a sing when you are getting out. Be careful with the things and people that can make it easy to bring you back in here.

## In This Unit

Well I ain't feeling the topic, so I'm gonna write on how I'm in this unit now with the older homeboys, just posted here waiting to go to the Wright Center, and I am number one on the list.

I should be leaving any day now. Damn, I been waiting in other unit for like a few months. Yeah, I'm pretty happy to be in here because in the other unit, the counselors try to give you time for no reason and that gets me mad. All the minors in there are trying to punk everybody and they say oh you should run.

In here the older homies are telling you not to and just finish your program, and get an education. In the other unit, they'll be like it's coo', just go on the run and slang, that's why I like this unit. All right Beat...

**-Mondo**

**From The Beat:** Listen to your older homies. They are right. The best thing to do when being in such a situation, is to finish your program, get an education, and do things right. Don't listen to those who just want your situation to get worst and worst. What plans do you have after finishing your program? You're almost there. Whatever happens, we wish you the best. Good luck! It was a pleasure.

## My Thoughts

What's up Beat today I am writing about public execution. I think public execution is bad even though some people deserve to get executed, because the person that is getting executed has family and I don't think you would like that everybody watches you get executed because it's not funny to know that your family is hurt for what's happening to you and just to know that some people make a game out of that. Also to know that they play with your family's feelings.

I don't really have a stop sign because even though I think of somebody or something when I am about to do some crazy stuff that does not stop me from doing it so I don't really have a stop sign.

**-Stomper**

**From The Beat:** You make an excellent point. Sometimes when we deal with things as serious as a person's life, we treat it like a game, and that's really disrespectful. I think that's how most people get locked up - we need to stop treating other's lives and our own like it's all a game, because real things lie in the balance.

## No Stopping Me

What's up with it? Well this is Piasa chillin' here? Well there no "stop sign" for a G like "me." This is the life I choose and the way I live is just might be, 'cause once I start, I can't stop.

**-Piasa**

**From The Beat:** Then be ready for the consequences! There will be many. Remember, it's the life you chose!

## Thinking Of My Homie

G-vole Beat! My topic today is about my homie who got shot. I used to kick it with him when we were youngsters. We were like carnals from the school. We used to get down with some fools and we used to get chased by some fools but they never got us. He moved to Los Banos and I stayed in Gilroy. But I got locked up and my mom told me two days ago that he got shot by some fools outside of his house and he was pretty bad. He got shot two times in the chest. I hope he been doing good, 'cause he's a strong vato and he is gonna make it. So Beat alratos.

**-Morgan**

**From the Beat:** We're sorry to hear about your friend and we hope he survives. It's hard to know that even when you get away 99 times out of 100, all it takes is once to end it all. So we need to all be careful what chances we're taking. Be smart!

## Public Execution Are A Bad Idea

I think that execution is not right because people will not learn how to do right. If you kill them that just dies and another kid getting in trouble. It will not show kids how to not get into trouble anymore.

**-Freddy**

**From The Beat:** We too think the more harsh punishments get, the more they often lose the sense of teaching. What does a person learn from an execution?

## My "Stop Sign"

To me, my mom is my stop sign. This is because I don't want to make her stressed out. She doesn't need anymore bullshhhh, because my dad and my brother already put her through so much. My mom has kept me from doing so much bullshhhh. But this time, I guess it slipped my mind. Although I truly regret it.

In the mean time, while I'm in here, I'm gonna get my act together as in credits and stuff. And when I get out, I'm gonna be all caught up and go straight from then on. I am going to get myself a job, help m mom pay some rent, and put some food on the table. I'm willing to do all this just to take some weight off my mom's shoulders.

**-Dave**

**From The Beat:** Nice. We wish you the best with your new change - new attitude. Your maturity at looking at a better way will so pay off in the end. Take life one day at a time. Stay focused

## No Regrets

What up Beat! This Lil' Buddah. I'm talking about the topic "Your Stop Sign." To tell you the truth, there are no red lights in my life, all green. I do not stop. I have no hesitation in what I do. The only way I will stop is when I'm six-feet-deep.

But once I see my mom's face before I do something, sometimes I won't do it because I hate to see my mother cry. My whole family was in the system, but the consequences that they went through still do not stop me from what I do.

Well Beat I gave you my opinion about the topic well until next time I'm up and through late!

**-Lil' Buddah**

**From The Beat:** And we respect your opinions! Just be aware of your desire in your life. You might regret it like other do. Don't permit something big hits your life to change the way you think. Avoid it now that you got a chance to do it. If that's the life you choose to live, be ready for what it brings.

## "Lockdown Love"

They got your boy locked up in the max,  
The things I've done, I can't turn back,  
But to face my charges, I'm sorry for that,  
It gives me time to think, I'm just bein' true,  
And to my girl, I can't say that I love you,  
I can only write it down, just to say  
What I feel in my heart, I know you love me too,  
I saw you in court just yesterday,  
You made my day, what more can I say?  
I know that you're goin' to be there for me,  
I love you baby,  
You're my angel for life and always eternity.

**-Saetern**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like this girl is faithful by your side through thick and thin. That kind of commitment is rare, and I hope you do the same for her. That's not just doing what you can for her, but also doing the best for yourself so that she can stop worrying and so that you can be there for her.

## Not Using Common Sense

Many people have common sense, but sometimes they don't use it because they forget because they're under the influence or something like that.

Well today I'm going to write about one time out of hundreds of times that I did not use common sense.

It was just another day in Gilroy. I was going to the park, when I pulled up in my sister's Honda Accord.

I seen my homies were chilling, drinking and smoking so I joined and smoked a blunt and drank two 40 oz. Then my homies asked me to do a beer run.

First of all, I wasn't using common sense when I took my sister's car and I wasn't using common sense when I started drinking and smoking, but I agreed with my homies on doing the beer run.

So we drove to Safeway to go jack some beers. I was the getaway driver. One of my homies went in, then the other two homies walked in. The two homies walked out, they got in the car and pulled out two-bottles of Hennessey so we were waiting for the next homie, when out of nowhere I see him running down the parking lot holding a bottle

running from Safeway workers. So I turned on the car and picked him up. He barely got in, when the workers started hitting my car. I sped up first going 10 mph, then I hit 50 mph out of nowhere a truck pulled out, good thing it was a truck not a person, then I crashed hella hard into the truck. My front got smashed and my car turned off.

All my homes in the car were tripping, so was I. Then I tried to start the car and it didn't start. I started tripping then I tried again and it started. I put it in reverse. I seen a cop at the Starbucks. The good thing is that he was on his break drinking coffee.

I hit a right and went down the street, parked the damaged car and started running. It was bad. I wasn't using common sense when I was going down the parking lot hitting 50 mph and I wasn't using common sense when I was drinking while driving. It was a cool day. Now that car is mine.

**-Lil' Silent G**

**From The Beat:** What an awful experience! It's not a good idea to drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol. You could have gotten hurt or killed. Irresponsible people who drive under the influence or alcohol and drugs have created the majority of the big accidents where people are killed. Learn from this experience. You could have killed a pedestrian.

## Ranch

Well today is a good day for me. Well it's because I'm in this unit finally and I'm with my family. It's hella fun and it make the time go by faster and the best thing is that we all are going to the Wright Center except for one.

I wish him the best 'cause he going to James and I'm not going to see him for a long time. This for home - I love him stay safe.

**-Cuong**

**From The Beat:** Do what you have to do to be with the people you care. Forget about what others say and do. Focus on yourself! What are your plans? Are you going to take your program seriously? What's next?

## It's The Power

Well it's this homeboy Lil' Lo coming from San Jose. Well I'm going to write about why I do the things I do. I do them because it's what gets my adrenaline pumping. People say we do things because our friends do it, or we want to look cool. I do it because I want the power, I want the money, and I want the respect.

Well I have to cut it short, stay up. Much love, late.

**-Lil' Lo**

**From The Beat:** There's always going to be someone with a bigger gun, with more soldiers, and with looser morals. If you really want to power, money, and respect, earn it with your mind and with your hands, not with cheap shows of adrenaline.

## This Common Sense

You snitch,  
I fight,  
talk shhh,  
take flight,  
I will, you might, I chill, you hide,  
I get disrespected,  
I will do the same,  
you get disrespected you don't do a thang,  
but you out in the free,  
I'm behind barbed wire, on top of a fence,  
I'm locked up because I got common sense.

**-Jerm**

**From The Beat:** Everyone has their own way of doing things, and you tell yours beautifully. But is it really worth keeping a common sense that keeps you from the most important things?

## My Family

My stop sign is my familia 'cause they are the only ones that really care about me. They don't really stop me from doing things 'cause when I do it. I don't think about it and I just do it. I don't think of the consequences 'till I get caught and end up in the halls again. That's when I think of the consequences.

**-Lil' Lucky**

**From The Beat:** One day you will learn your lesson and will think about things before doing them. Would you learn someday?

## Use Your Common Sense

What comes to mind when I hear common sense is the ability to tell right from wrong. When you're going to be put in situations and have to be able to use common sense, like when your family is going to go on a family outing who do you chill with, your homies or your family? Common sense. And you're going to let your homies make decisions for you? "No." It's common sense. Are you going to go to work or stay home and get drunk? Getting drunk is what I would like to do, but you can't because work is where the money is at, so I go to work, common sense.

**-Pinky**

**From The Beat:** If you know so much about common sense, what brought you here? Do you use common sense? If so, what did you miss? So now we would like to use your common sense. What would you choose, freedom or jail?

## Most Favorite Staff

Ms. M. is my personal favorite staff because she is the most caring and loving staff in the hall. She makes my time pass by quickly in here. She threw us a Sunday ice cream party.

She is very nice and always tells the truth. She mostly lets me slide on certain thing. She hooks me up, like popcorn, soda, etc. the thing I like mostly about her is she is up front. I like this unit because she makes it fun, but I still don't want to stay here.

**-A favorite detainee**

**From The Beat:** Thank God for people like her. Maybe she is the inspiration you need to become a counselor in the future and be able to do nice things like she does. Have you thought about it?



## Want To See Her

What's up Beat! I ain't feeling the topics today, so I'm going to write about this girl I know. They call her Clowny. I met her when I was out and we were supposed to kick it, but she ran out of gas in her lil' rider.

She was supposed to pick me and a homie up. But yeah shhh happens, but when I get out, I hope I could kick it with her because she knows this G owns that chola. She knows what I'm talking about. If she would read this when I show her, she would laugh and know that it was me. Well, I'll see her again so yeah to all out there stay up late.

**-G-life**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get to meet her. Maybe hanging out with someone with different ways of viewing things, can make you change and guide you to a better and positive road. Good luck!

## My Stop Sign

What's good Beat! It's Boi. I thought ya heard. Well today I'm talking about my stop signs. My stop sign is the sign from God.

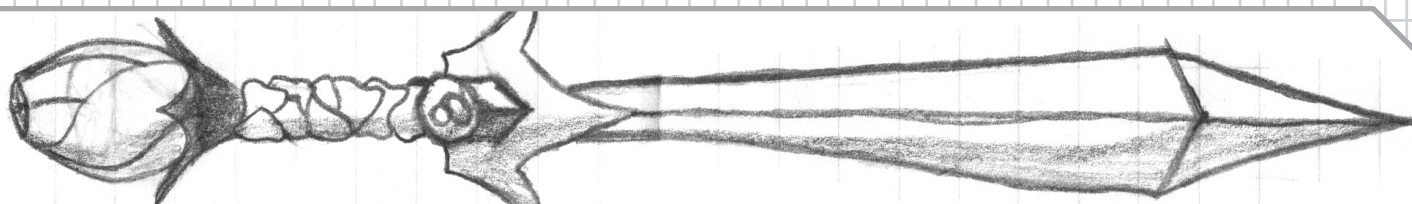
Well let me explain this to you readers. Every time I'm in a G-ride, I always pray to the "Big Man" upstairs before I drive off because I don't want nothing to happen to me or my friends.

So this one time I was driving in the East Side, I passed a cop. Then a few hours later I'm in a high speed chase then I'm in here. So that's my stop sign.

Well thanks Beat and Beat readers!

**-Boi**

**From The Beat:** It seems like your stop sign isn't very efficient. High speed chase is very dangerous. You could have killed any innocents while trying to escape. Police are more experienced in driving and in speed chase. Now answer this question, was it worth it?



## Next Time

This is something we use everyday. But you have to know how to use it. You think you know what you're doing till it just hits you now you look back at what happened and now you know not to do it next time. You look back at everything you did and know the whole time it was just common sense.

**-L.**

**From The Beat:** How will you remember next time?

*There's been multiple times when I was going to go out and do something to get myself in trouble and my girlfriend gives me this look and it stops me.*

## I Thank Them

I have a personal stop sign and it's not my parents it's my brothers. All of my three little brothers and my little sister they made me stop a lot of things in my past and I thank them for that.

**-Lady Happy**

**From The Beat:** They must really mean a lot to you for you to be willing to consider your behavior and stop because whatever it was is not in their best interest. You're a great sister, even if they never realize and can thank you for it, they'll have better lives.

## Too Fast

I think things happen too fast sometimes so it's hard to use common sense most of the time.

**-Nicholas**

**From The Beat:** Yes, the only thing you can control is how you respond when things are coming at you fast. It takes practice.

## Out of Trouble

What's good Beat? Well my stop sign is my girl. There's been multiple times when I was going to go out and do something to get myself in trouble and my girlfriend gives me this look and it stops me. It's kept me out of trouble many times, like this one time it turns out that my friends that I was gonna go with got caught up.

My girl is my best friend she keeps me out of trouble. Also when I was poppin' hella pills I started treating her different and when I got too out of pocket she let me know, and when she spilled that first tear that was my stop sign. She has always worked in that way for me and Beat this is my stop sign, thanks for letting me share my thoughts.

**-Spanky**

**From The Beat:** It definitely sounds like she has your best interests in mind. Take care of this relationship, remember how important it is to you.

## How Much I Value My Freedom

I think that my stop sign sometimes is my freedom. I also think that no matter how much I value my freedom I just blow it off and do what I want to do.

**-Young L.**

**From The Beat:** We like this quote: "The main cause for failure and unhappiness is trading what you want most for what you want at the moment."

## Life

Life is so valuable. But yet I keep destroying my life with weed, pills, and drank. And yet I ask God why I do what I do. Is it my choice or is it Satan that makes me do what I do?

Sometimes I do dumb things to support a habit. I steal for that habit. I steal for my family. Life you get choices difficult and easy. Life was gonna never be easy.

I feel so lonely at night because of the life decision I made. I love my dad. But I steal from him. But it's all different now cause I have God.

-Jesse

**From The Beat:** Some say that the forces of good and evil (God and Satan) are inside us, and it is these forces we reckon with when we make choices. If you devote yourself to good, like you say you do because you "have God," you may be able to pay attention more to that part of yourself.

## To Do Better

I got two stop signs  
whose faces encourage me to do better  
Although I sometimes push my love away  
they're always in my heart.  
My brother and sister.

-Pebbles

**From The Beat:** We're glad you recognize the faces of your stop signs. What does pushing your love away do for you? What if you didn't push it away, what would happen that you try to avoid?

## Life, Good & Evil

Life goes on 1 day after day. I don't know if I will be here today or dead tomorrow. We think life is difficult because of our struggle but what we don't realize is it's just the beginning.

We all are going to be judged one day. So we should prepare for the war that's coming. But if you were smart you would know who wins. So all I can tell you now is Christ is the only salvation. So if you want love he will be there to give always & forever.

So with God you can achieve anything. So don't waste your time there's one God that's here for you. Don't let him down for there's better life with good & evil.

-Jix

**From The Beat:** How does this work for you in your daily life? How do you put these beliefs into practice? Does this help you with personal challenges?

## My Girl Pt.2 (I've Cheated)

Even though I love you girl  
I have something to get off my chest.  
I have been cheating on you for quite some time.  
She gets me anything I want she's easier to talk to  
and one more thing you know her better than I do. She's  
there for me every time we fight and fuss.  
I go to her house she cook me a meal that's what's up.  
I just can't choose I love you both  
I might just love her more because if it wasn't for her  
I wouldn't have met you. Please be a woman about this I  
know when I tell her about you  
she's going to be pissed. Well I still hope  
you love me because Mom I love you  
let me call the other girl and tell her the same--ring ,  
ring hello, yeah I just called to say one thing  
I love you Grandma.

-Twun-Twun

**From The Beat:** We hope you share these humorous testaments of love with the women in your life!

## The Beat

What's up Beat how's it going? Me I'm good only got 31 more days.

Well I think that public executions would be good because I think that people would see how terrible it is to die like that, and more people would stop killing each other.

-Josh

**From The Beat:** There have been public executions at different times in history, (including recently under the Taliban in Afghanistan) and unfortunately that's not how people reacted.

## Where I Was

I did not know what to write.

A what up Beat this yo home boy lil' Elfy from Solano County.

I'ma talk about the outs, when I was in the outs man-  
I was doing meth man it was not fun because where I was man.

Look at were I'm at in juvy. It sucks because I can't be with the females. I was having a lot of fun when I was in my house throwing a party, fat party. Watch when I get out I'm going to throw a party. So next time Beat.

-Lil' Elfy

**From The Beat:** What else do you plan to do when you get out? Parties can be fun but they don't help you accomplish your goals. What are your goals, Elfy. What does your best self want from this life?

## Enough Common Sense

Do you have enough common sense  
to not rob the local 7-11?  
Do you have enough common sense  
to not pull the gun and take another life?  
Do you have enough common sense  
to go to court and not be on the run?  
Do you have enough common sense  
to not steal that car with an unlocked door?  
Do you have enough common sense  
to not throw the first punch and start a fist fight?  
Do you have enough common sense  
to not go out and join a gang?  
Do you have enough common sense  
to go home to your family at night?

-A

**From The Beat:** Good questions. We think this sense is not that common because we meet a lot of people who get caught up by doing exactly what you're saying. Does something override people's common sense sometimes? How does that happen? How about you?

## In Your Mind

Wus good wit da Beat? You know, I heard the dumbest thing about common sense. Someone told me common sense was God speaking. I think that's bull.

Common sense is me thinking not God. Common sense is knowing right from wrong. Like when you're about to do something wrong your common sense tells you not to do it because its wrong.

A preacher told me that's God talking. I don't buy it. Can anyone honestly say they heard God talking. I don't think so. It's just you thinking. You making decisions in your mind. It's having sense.

-Carlos

**From The Beat:** Some people think God is talking through the decisions they make, through thinking in their mind. We don't think they mean they literally hear a voice. Some people would call that their conscience.

## My Ebony Angel

As I looked into the night sky from earth  
surrounding the succumfords of the moon  
was the ebony illustration of an angel beyond worth.  
The smile she revealed manifested gold  
& her sprit thrived on nature.

The texture of black diamonds in her soul,  
with rubies on the outer layer to her heart which is a  
rose.

During I grieve,  
as I await the sun to leave,  
for this angel is the most special indeed.

So when night falls it's my tears that bleed  
for the beautiful has come.  
as a living form of Egyptian Queen Nefertiti.  
So I'm happy to be her daughter.  
Everyday is mourned cause she can't see me.

But even though we're apart,  
my mind uses its wings to fly  
to hug this ebony angel who's my mother  
so I cant wait to close my eyes!  
She's not gone forever.  
I'll sleep tonight & bring us together.  
I love you mom no matter what you choose!

**-Queen Pooh Lola**

**From The Beat:** This poem is full of rich imagery. We wonder why this beautiful queen can't see her daughter, and lives in the night sky where the only chance for connection with her is unconscious—in sleep. Is your own mom so out of reach? It's good to be clear yourself that you love her no matter what she must choose.

## Move On

Some say the best things in life  
aren't things at all.  
Every night I think of you I wish I could call.  
When I go to sleep you're my American dream.  
Your beauty is dope so call me a feen,  
If I wanted anything, you're my everything and more.  
You got a sexy body but it's you I adore.  
If I wanted to be in your life would you let me in?  
My heart is like a house and for you I open the door.  
I love you forever you sexy --- boy.  
I have to move on from you, you hurt me so much  
but I hope and believe we still have trust.

**-Smiley**

**From The Beat:** Why do you trust someone who hurt you so much? We know it can seem like we don't choose who we love, it's just something we feel. However, it's important not to trust someone who doesn't have your best interest in mind.

## Knowing You're Gonna Get Caught

Not having common sense is knowing what's right but  
still doing the wrong thing or doing something wrong  
knowing you're gonna get caught.

For example one time I was with my homeboys and  
they wanted to go hit a lick. I was on probation and I  
knew if I get caught I would go back to the Halls. I did it  
anyways and guess what? I got caught. I should've used  
my common sense but I didn't. That's what not having  
common sense is.

**-Lil' D**

**From The Beat:** What do you think has to happen to convince you once and for all to listen to yourself when you "know" something? Why do you think you sometimes ignore your own knowing? Some say we are at times more comfortable with our "dark" side than with our "light" side—

## A Lil' Song

Something about you baby drives me crazy. Something  
about this pretty girl blows my mind. Si tu supieras lo  
que siento cada vez que me pongo pensar en todos los  
momentos.

All the good times we had me and you. You and  
I hot summer night making love in July, una mujer  
incomparable. I'm in love for life me facinastes in all ways  
and the things you do my pretty girl, I gotta give it up for  
you. Tell the world tell your girls and your family con esta  
anillo te prometo you my everything 'cause no body ever  
made me feel the way you do.

I just dropped you off already miss you chica bonita  
sonrisa and sinseta. I wanna be witchu hasta que me  
muera make a pact to always stick together witchu by my  
side, girl I'm down for whatever. Something about you  
baby drives me crazy. Something about this pretty girl  
blows my mind. Well I saw you from across the room I had  
to keep my attention on you so about that pretty face, that  
pretty smile, you couldn't help but get lost in those pretty  
eyes...yeah this girl she has it all the type of woman you  
take to my mother and say look what I found,

I found love and companionship, someone to talk to  
who ain't afraid to handle it and who understands that my  
life is different and accepts it this isn't what I expected.  
She's beautiful inside and out, something hard to find  
in the world today. Even on my worst days she got me  
happy like a kid waking up on his birthday. This love is  
different, it was based on friendship. I'm letting you know  
that I'm thinking of you. Next time Beat.

**-Lil' Elfy**

**From The Beat:** We like the way this song sounds Elfy, beautiful on the inside and out. We caution you to be sure you can keep promises you make. Some times you can take it little by little, honestly, and see for real how far the relationship can go.

## Locked Up

I'm locked up over here in New Found's  
Like a stray dog caught by the dog pound  
Over here they have you do sumthing junky  
called the "t-pot"  
and wear tucked in shirts without a tank top

You do sumthang wrong they take points

Send you back to your room which you call  
your own joint

Cause you gonna live here for the past 4 months  
I got to stick up with this stuff and  
live with these punks.

**-Lil' King**

**From The Beat:** We guess there's only one way to avoid having to do this...

## The Streets

The streets is not a good place the streets will leave you  
flat on your face. The streets will have you stressing all  
day the streets is not the place to play. The streets is  
unsafe and cold, the streets your life is what they hold.

The streets will eat you up, the streets is were I grew  
up.

The streets is a messed up place so remember to stay  
in your place.

**-Jaron**

**From The Beat:** How are you going to stay off the streets when you are released? How can you set yourself up with another life?



## I Learned Common Sense

I always wondered what made my life so bad from time to time I used to think it was my Mom and Dad

They always wanted me to do things I didn't want to do and they would say "I'm just trying to help you."

They would always tell me to have faith and trust God instead I would listen to that wicked old fraud.

If you want to know who the fraud is that brought me down to his level

it was a tricky little snake they call him the Devil.

And his was the life that he showed me that had a hold of me

so it made me become the person I didn't want to be.

I wonder why I let the devil have a hold of me?

I think I was because I wasn't consuming my B-I-B-L-E.

Now God has control of my life and I'm starting to change

and I have that feeling inside and it's that good strange.

Now I stick with God and I have the gift I used to never see

and the funny thing was I used to steal and this is free.

The gift God has given me is eternal life

instead of the devil's way, which is death from his knife.

Well now I know with God in my life there's no where near bad

and I never would have known that if it wasn't for my Mom and Dad.

**-Ernest**

**From The Beat:** What happened to turn you toward God? Your parents were always encouraging you right, so what finally happened where you turned the other way?

## Leavin' Home

When I am in jail my heart drop cause I let all my family down. Every-time I'm in jail I think about when I was home, but really when I was home I was never home.

So all the time I am missing bein' in hear is all the time I am missing when I could be with my family. But when I am in jail I know my mom could sleep at night cause she know I am safe. But that's what happens when you leave home.

**-J**

**From The Beat:** How can you remember how important your family is to you when you are released? How could you be home more?

## Make Her Proud

Every time is funk in the hood and my bras call me and they tell me to get active I think of my brother and how he took somebody's life who happened to be my best friend.

I think about how his life is right now. It's a disaster. I didn't even get to see my brother grow up with me. We had plans when we were younger and now we can't do any of that because he's facing life.

And I always remember the look on my Mom's face and pain in her voice when she asked my other friend, "Please don't tell me you saw my son pull that trigger."

I love my Mom and I don't want her to suffer no more and I'm going to make her proud for having me as a child.

Mom, you and Bra is my stop signs.

**-Lil Flea**

**From The Beat:** We are so sorry you had to lose your best friend, and your brother to prison. You are wise to remember this when people ask you to repeat these same mistakes. You carry a heavy load, and you are right to try to help your Mom from more suffering. Take Care.

## Common Sense

When I was little somebody had once asked me how to boil an egg, and I had told them something very unusual.

Now when I do stuff I tend to listen more and understand what they had said to me. I use a lot more common sense now that I'm locked up. You have to otherwise you get yelled at.

Some people in jail are just stupid and think they're doing something right when it's just the opposite. All I got to say is just use common sense.

**-Boots**

**From The Beat:** It definitely helps to listen. We have a lot in common, though many of us think differently than each other. A little help is nice.

## DAY 141

What's up beat! Its my 141 day I have 28 days to go. Man I cant wait to get out I'm tired but I'm glad at the same time.

I learned a lot coming to jail if I didn't come I would be all messed up by now. Its really has made my life better. I seen a lot of people I grew up with from kindergarten on up it's sad I had to see them in here but it's cool.

It's only my first time being locked up-and my last well I'm gone peace.

**-Twun-Twun**

**From The Beat:** Good luck and take care of yourself to make sure you don't return!

## Thoughts and Feelings

What's up Beat hope y'all staying up out there. Well today my Beat is about one of my lil' brothers that passed when I about two years old.

Well his name is Christopher Michael Caldwell, he passed away when he was 8 months from SIDS. For those who don't know what that is it's Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Well when babies are young they sometimes have trouble breathing. Well he stopped breathing and my mom and dad found him all blue.

I've always wondered what it felt like to my parents to see him like that but I've never had the heart to ask them, but I imagine it was devastating and horrifying. My parents aren't like most parents they're the best even though they did a lot of drugs they still loved me and my brothers.

I've always wondered if my brother would have lived if it would've changed the outcome of my parents drug abuse, because if it was me I probably would've done more drugs than them.

They always loved us sooo much always did what they could for us even though we've always just made it by. As it was I've always wondered if my lil' bro were still ere if it would've been different. He was one of a kind, an "Angel Baby."

I used to get mad at God for taking him away from us and not even giving me a chance to know him, but I realized that he is in a better place up above watching over us. Well that's what I feel and am thinking about. Thanks Beat for letting me express myself and get this stuff off my chest. I respect what y'all do, keep it up. Much love.

**-Spanky**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry for your loss Spanky. If this happened when you were about two you've been carrying around this loss and wondering how things might have been different for a long time. We don't know your parents, but it might be good for you to ask them, respectfully about what happened. It might help them to talk about it too.

## What You Can and Can't Do

If you had common sense  
you won't be jumping that fence.  
You wouldn't need to  
you wouldn't have to.  
If you had common sense  
the cops won't be after you  
'cause you would know what you can and can't do.  
Common sense is when you do what your parents taught  
you.  
If I had common sense, I'd stay in school  
instead of acting like a fool.  
Now I'm in BCJDC doing time for my crime  
looking at my white walls, realizing I have no money  
to pay the fine 'cause I have no common sense.

**-Lil' Flip**

**From The Beat:** Now that you realize what you're missing, common sense, can you get up and get your common sense back so you can start making the right choices? Can you get a job?

## Sorry Momma

I'm sorry mom for what I have done  
I know it was wrong I know it was bad  
But I've learned my lesson please take me away from  
here  
Take me to be far from this place  
To be with you and my family to be free  
All I want is you, mom, in my life  
To guide me on the right path  
To make sure your little girl does good in life  
Please mom, O please, I'm sorry, please forgive me  
I wanna do good

**-Melly**

**From The Beat:** Saying you're sorry is important, and meaning it is crucial. How do you treat your mother when you're not locked up? We're sure your mother would love to help you and guide you—and you must do your part as well!

## Hope

Her voice makes me happy, good and calm, but when she  
leaves, I feel sad and bad. When she comes back, I feel  
like my life is back together.

When she kisses my lips, I feel like I could do anything  
I want, but then she left me. I sat and cried over and over  
till this day. I think about her and I have hope that one  
day she will come back to me.

**-Joker**

**From The Beat:** Hold to your hope, Joker, it's a good tool to help you get through the hard times you're going through now. You're lucky you know how good love can feel, it is something you can look forward to feeling again.

## At Times

I feel like I am dense. Lost with no common sense, and  
always wasting money on drugs instead of paying my  
rent.

When I first got incarcerated, I was twisted and bent.  
The only reason why is because I lost my common sense,  
wondering "when will I get my sense in mind?" hopefully,  
at the drop of a dime.

Locked up for a jacked up crime, and now I sit here  
waiting to finish my time.

**-Lil' Lonely**

**From The Beat:** Addiction override common sense for many people. Maybe if you deal with your addiction issues, you will reveal your common sense. If you have an addiction, that relationship comes first, before the rent, common sense, or anything else.

## Execution

Getting locked up,  
when the day comes  
you know your life is going to end.  
The only thing is I hope I get sent  
to the heaven gates.  
Now what you got to wait for is the next court date.  
Looking at them smile  
it's like I never even had a file.  
Guess now I'm going to miss my wife--  
but I never stop living the gangsta life.

**-Kellie**

**From The Beat:** Why is the gangsta life more important than the people you love? When you live it there's a constant risk of losing you. If you didn't live the gangsta life, and went legit—who might you become? What would it be like to be free of the threat of institutions, and death?

## No Common Sense

I don't got no common sense.

**-Nuevo Mexico**

**From the Beat:** All we could publish was these six words. Your writings are good, but you know what you wrote is not appropriate for the Beat. Keep writing, and send us what we can publish.



## Teach By Example

When I hear common sense, I think it means when you  
walk outside in a sweater and it's summer-time, and  
when you wanna do something and you can't because  
you forgot to ask for a permission slip.

I think people don't have common because they act  
and don't think, and you could teach common sense by  
example. If you can't teach by example, you just tell them  
over and over again.

**-Brina**

**From The Beat:** You're correct, sometimes people act before thinking about the consequences, and then it's too late. You've described how people raise kids—by example, and with a lot of repetition.

## Las Peores Drogas

La verdad es que no uso drogas pero alguien de mi familia si usa. Pienso que unas de las peores drogas son el crack y la chiva porque he visto gente cuando andan drogada. Es feo mirar a una persona cuando anda drogada. Gracias a Dios hasta ahorita no uso drogas solo alcohol y la verdad es que se me está volviendo un problema en mi vida.

La última vez que llore fue por una persona que me hizo daño. No imaginaba que una persona tan cercana a mí familia me iba a hacer este daño. Me he dado cuenta que es cierto lo que no podría creer.

**From The Beat:** El alcohol es otra droga peligrosa y otra adicción. No te has dado cuenta cuantas personas estan esperando un transplante de igado por el acohol. El alcohol trae mucha enfermedades aparte de todas los problemas que te meten. Piensalo bien!

## The Worst Drugs

The truth is that I don't use drugs but I know someone from my family who does. I think some of the worse drugs are crack and heroine because I've seen how people act when they are high. Thank God I don't use drugs, i just drink acohol and the truth is that it is becoming a problem in my life.

The last time I cried was over someone who harmed me. I never imagined that a very closed person from my family would hurt me. I've come to the conclusion that what I didn't want to believe is real.

**-El Pedernal, San Fracisco**

**From The Beat:** Alcohol is another dangerous drug and a bad addiction. Do you know how many people are depending on a list to get a liber transplant over alcohol? Alcohol creates many deaseases besides the problems it get you into. Think about it!

## Lo Que Me Dijo Una Persona

La persona que más cree en mí es mi madre que siempre me apoyo. Siempre me dice que cambie y que sea una nueva persona. Ella es la persona que más se preocupa por mí.

Ha habido una persona que me dijo que no iba a yegar muy lejos porque no yo no servía para nada y que solo servia para causar problemas. Ese día le llamé a mi madre y le conté lo que había dicho esa persona. Mi madre me dijo que no me sintiera triste que yo era especial porque hay personas que dicen ser tu amigos y en el fondo te hace sentir mal.

**From The Beat:** Tu madre le falto decir que lo único que tienes que hacer era demostrarlo. Al salir de aqui deberias demostrarselo y no dejar que lo que dijo la otra persona se haga realidad. ¿Estas dispuesto a eso?

## What A Person Told Me

The person who believes in me is my mother who always supported me. She tells me to change and to become a better person. She's the person who worries about me the most.

There was a person who told me that I wasn't going to get too far in life and I wasn't worth it and that I'm living just to create problems. That day, I call my mother and I told her what this person said. My mother told me not to get sad about it, I was very special, and that there are people who say they are your friend and deep in side they make you feel bad.

**-Juan, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Your mother forgot to tell you that the only thing you need is to show what you are. Once you get released, you should prove it and don't let that person's words become a reality. Are you down for that?

## Mi Ultimo Abrazo

El ultimo abrazo se lo di a mi madre cuando me vine. Fue muy triste porque ella no quería que viniera pero era necesario por la situación económica que vivimos.

Vivir con los ojos cerrados es facil porque tu realidad no la quieres ver. No quieres ver lo que te está pasando porque no te quieres dar cuenta que andas mal camino en tu vida. Ahora he abierto los ojos para reflexionar y pensar mejor en mi vida.

**From The Beat:** ¿Cuales son los cambios que haras ahora que te has dado cuenta de tus malos caminos? ¿Qué cambiaras en tu vida? ¿Serás el mismo? ¡Piensalo!

## My Last Hug

I gave my last hug to my mother before I came. It was sad because she didn't want me to come here, but it was necessary due the economic situation we are facing.

Living with your eye closed is easy because you are not seeing the reality of what you need to see. You don't want to see what's happening around you because you don't want to realize you are on a bad roads in your life. Now I have opened my life to reflect and think better about my life.

**-Levis, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** What are the changes you will make now that you have realized that you are walking on bad roads? Are you going to change your life? Or be the same? Think about it!

## Mis Pensamiento Sobre Los Temas

Lo que veo ahora que no veía antes es como lo que dice esta hoja sobre la pérdida de un amigo. No sabía que se sentía y esa es una realidad que lo hace a uno abrir los ojos. Los hace ver la realidad o reflexionar. Miras las cosas como son, no como los demás personas en el mundo.

El ultimo abrazo fue el de mi madre y fue triste porque me vine para los Estados Unidos. Hubieron sonrisas, lágrimas y se siente dificil porque sabes que vas a estar lejos de esa persona que no vas a ver por mucho tiempo.

La única persona que me dice eso cuando hablo es mi madre porque ella confia en mí y porque quiere un mejor futuro para mí.

**From The Beat:** Esperamos que esto te haya abierto bien los ojos y puedas ver en realidad lo que necesitas ver para hacer las cosas como se deben. Si tu madre confia en ti, es porque ella sabe que tú en el fondo de su ser debe saber que puedes er una mejor persona. Empieza a demostrar lo que tienes.

## My Thoughts

What I see now I didn't see before is exactly what this page says about losing a friend. I didn't know what it feels and that's the reality that makes people open your eyes. It makes you see the reality and make you reflect. You see things how they are, and not like other people view the world.

The last hug I gave was my mother and it was sad because it was right before I came to the US. There were many laughs, tears and it feels hardf because you know you will be away from those people and won't be able to see them in a long time.

The only people that tells me this is when I speak with my mother because she believes in me and want a better future for me.

**-F-Paz, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We hope this opens your eyes and you'll be able to see the real you, that you need to see to do things that are supposed to be done. If you mother believes in you, it is because within herself she knows that you can become a better person.



## Fue A Mis Seres Queridos

El último abrazo que di fue a mi familia, a mi madre, a mi padre, y a mis amigos. Cuando di esos abrazos fue antes de venirme para los Estados Unidos. Me senti muy triste porque dejaba a mi familia y a mis amigos.

Mi madre estaba llorando y me dijo que me cuidara. Por la gracia de Dios, estoy sano y salvo. Me siento alegre porque ya voy a estar con ellos porque los quiero mucho.

Yo creo en mis padres porque cuando me vine para aquí a San Francisco, me dijo mi padre que me cuidara porque sino alg'un día iba a amanecer en la cárcel. No fue mentira. El que no dice cosas malas sobre mí es mi familia. Yo confío en ellos y ellos en mí.

**From The Beat:** Siempre se siente bien darle un gran abrazo a los seres querido y más cuando te vas muy lejos. Esperamos que siempre sigas así sano y salvo. Ya sabes lo que tienes que hacer para la próxima. Aprende de tus errores.

## There Were From My Loved Ones

My last hug I gave was from my family, my mother, my father and friends. I gave those hugs before coming to the US.

My mother was crying and told me to take care. Thank to God, I am sane and safe. I feel happy because soon I'll be with the people I love.

I believe in my parents because when I came to San Francisco, my dad told me to take care of myself or else I was going to end up in a jail. It wasn't a lie. The people who don't do anything bad is my family. I believe in them and they believe in me.

**-Darwin, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It always feels good to hug our loved ones especially when you are going away to a far place. We hope you continue to be safe. You know what you have to do for the next time. Learn from your mistakes.

## Los Que Lloraron

Quien me dió el ultimo abrazo en Honduras fue mi madre y mi padre. Cuando les dije que me venía para los Estados Unidos, al principio se sintieron bien tristes y hasta derramaron lágrimas. A lo mejor pensaron que ya no me iban a volver a ver. Ellos me abrazaron muy fuerte.

Aquí en Estados Unidos quien me dió un abrazo por última vez fue mi novia la cual quiero mucho. Lastimosamente me van a deportar y no se que va a pasar ahora en adelante. Mi novia está muy triste y dice que se va a ir para Honduras. Ella es de México. Yo le digo que me espere que si Dios lo permite voy a regresar.

**From The Beat:** Claro que van a llorar. Ellos saben el riesgo grande que uno pasa al llegar aquí. Deberías de considerar tus planes antes de haceros. Y si los llegas a hacer, piensa muy bien que es lo que puedes hacer o no hacer para poder estar con la personas que quieres y ayudar a los que necesitan de tu ayuda.

## The One Who Cried

Those who gave me the last hug were my mother and father in Honduras. When I told them I was coming to the US, at the beginning, they were sad and they even shed tears. Maybe they taught that they were never going to see me again. They hugged me so hard.

Here in the US, the one who gave me the last hug was my girl who I love. Sadly, they are going to deport me, and I don't know what's going to happen from now on.

My girl is very sad and she says that she wants to go to Honduras to live with me. She's from Mexico. I tell her to wait for me, and that if God permits it, I'm going to be back soon.

**-Freddy, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Of course they are going to cry. They know about how big the risk is to come here. You should consider your plans before doing them. If you come back, think very well about what you can do or can't do to be with the person you love and those who need your help.

## Con Los Ojos Cerrados

Al vivir con los ojos cerrados es facil porque crees que todo es facil pero cuando los abres, todo es mucho más difícil.

He perdido muchas oportunidades pero le doy Gracias a Dios que estoy bien.

El ultimo abrazo que recibí fue de mi madre, mi padre, de mis hermanos/as, y mi mujer. Hubieron abrazos tristes, hubo lágrimas, sonrisas, abrazos, carcajadas, y dolor.

**From The Beat:** Enfrentar la realidad es muy difícil, pero es algo que siempre se requiere para poder vivir la vida. Es parte de la vida. Siempre en las despedidas surgen de todo tipos de sentimientos. Esperamos que desde ahora en adelante procures que solo sean de pura felicidad.

## With My Eyes Closed

To live with the eyes closed is very easy because you think everything is easy, but when you open them, you realize things are much harder.

I've lost many opportunities, but I thank God I am fine.

My last hug I received was from my mother, father, brothers and sisters, and my lady. There were sad hugs, tears, smiles, hugs, laughs and pain.

**-Dixon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** To face the reality is very hard, but it is something that is required to live life. It's part of life. Good-byes always bring certain types of feelings. We hope you make an effort in creating hugs of happiness.

## Lo Qué Mi Madre Me Ha Dicho

Lo que veo ahora es todo lo malo que he andado y verme donde estoy por hacer cosas malas.

Dios siempre nos da una oportunidad, pero tenemos amigos que nos aconsejan mal.

La última vez que recibí un abrazo fue cuando me venía para aquí. Fue un abrazo muy triste que recibí de mi mama y fue ahí cuando lloré.

La única persona que confía en mí es mi madre quien es la única que se preocupa por mí. Me dice que es lo buen y que es lo malo y me dice que me aparte de lo malo.

A Dios le pido que me ayude a salir adelante y no seguir en cosas malas.

**From The Beat:** Tú madre te ha dicho lo que es bueno y malo para ti, pero parece que no le has hecho caso. ¿Qué te pasó? Sólo quieren lo mejor para ti.

## What My Mother Had Told Me

What I have realized now is all the things I've been messing with and realizing where I am not over bad things.

God always give us opportunities but we have friends that misguide us.

The last time I received a hug was before I came here. It was a sad hug because it was from my mother and that's when I cried.

The person who believes in me is my mother who is the only one who worries about me. She tells me what's good and bad and she always tells me to get away from what's bad.

I ask God to help me succeed and not to continue doing bad things.

**-Adonay, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Your mother has told you what's good and bad for you, but it seems like you haven't listened to her. What happened? Listen to her to become the person you want to be. They only want the best for you.

## My Grandmother

Les voy a contar algo de mi abuelita. My abuelita se llama Kornella H. Ella tiene 104 años. Mi abuelita vive y me cuenta que hace muchos años en un cerro había una mina que se perdió un hombre con una vaca. En ese cerro, los gringos explotaron a una mina que tiene pacto con el Diablo. En esa mina se escuchan niños llorar y se escuchan muchas cosas espantosas.

My abuelita cree en Dios porque dice que Dios le ha hecho milagros. Mi abuelita tiene muchos años y ahorita en este 16 de septiembre va a cumplir otro. Mi madre tiene 80 años.

**From The Beat:** Deberías de estar feliz que ellos llegaron a cierta edad. Están muy mayor y deberías de hacer lo posible en pasarte los últimos días y años con ellas. Si tu abuela tiene 104 y cumplirá 105, y tu madre te tubo a ti en sus 60s, eso quiere decir que a lo mejor llegaras a tener mas de cien años si es que te cuidas.

## My Grandmother

I'm going to share something about my grandmother. My grandmother's name is Kornella H. She is 104 years old. My grandmother is alive and she tells me that many years ago, there was a mine in a volcano, where a man got lost with a cow. In that volcano, White people exploded bombs in the mine that has a pact with the devil. In that mine, you can hear people crying and a lot of scary things are heard.

My grandmother believes in God because she says God has made her miracles. My grandmother has many years of living, and this September 16th, she will turn another year old.

**-Rudy, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You should be happy they made it to their ages. They are kind of old, and you should do what ever is possible to spend their last days with them. If your grandmother is 104 and is going to be 105 years old, and your mother has you in her 60s, that means that you might live more than a 100 years if you take care of you.

## El Abrazo Triste

El ultimo abrazo más triste fue cuando me despedi de mi madre, mi padre, y mis hermanos al venirme para acá. Fue triste porque no sabía si lo iba a volver a ver porque cuando uno se viene para acá, uno viene decidido a todo, hasta a morir.

Gracias a Dios me encuentro bien, no muy bien porque no estoy con mi familia, pero muy pronto voy a ser deportado a Honduras para estar con mi gente que más amo.

Aunque aqui tengo a mi mujer que amo tanto, pienso en volver muy pronto por ella y por una feria más porque no tengo nada en Honduras. Yo quiero decirle a la raza de Honduras que si Dios nos da oportunidad que sepan aprovecharlas porque cuando llegamos a Honduras no tenemos ni para los chicles.

**From The Beat:** Si vas a volver a este lugar haz las cosas bien. Si es tan grande tu necesidad de hacer dinero, hazlo correctamente y legalmente. Hay gente que dependen de ti, y si vuelves puedes que solo dilates un día en la calle haciendo el tipo de trabajo que haces. Hay otros trabajos que te pueden ayudar. Sólo necesitas buscar uno.

## My Sad Hug

My last hug was sad because it was when I said good-bye to my mother, father and siblings before I came here. It was sad because I didn't know if I was going to see them again because when you come here, you are decided to face anything, even death.

Thank God I'm fine, not as fine as I want because I'm not with my family, but very soon I'm going to be deported to Honduras to be with my family who I love the most.

Even though I have a woman I love so much here, I'm thinking to come back for her and for some money because I don't have any money in Honduras. I want to tell my Honduran people to take advantage of opportunities or else when we go back to Honduras, we are not going to have a penny for piece of gum.

**-Tavo, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** If you are going to come back to this country, do things right. If your necessity is to make money is huge, try to get money correctly and legally. There are people who depend on you, and you come back to do the same thing, you might last one day on the streets doing what you do. There are other jobs that can help you. You just need to search for one.

## El Camino Hacia Acá Es Un Riesgo

Bueno, el mayor riesgo de mi vida es cuando me vine de Honduras para los Estados Unidos. Es un gran riesgo venirte por el tren en Mexico. Vienes en ese tren peligrando a que te corte una mano, un piez que se yo. También es un riesgo pro los ladrones que salen con armas queriendole quitar lo poco que traemos para llegar aqui. Ese es el mayor riesgo que he pasado en la vida. También aparte de ser un riesgo es una aventura porque conocí lugares que nunca conocí antes.

**From The Beat:** Si es un riesgo venirse de esa manera para aquí. Lo bueno sería arriesgarse por algo que valga la pena. ¿O Valio la pena?

## The Journey To Come Here Is A Risk

Well, my biggest risk was when I came here from Honduras. It is a big risk to come here from Honduras. It's a risk to come here by train from Mexico. You come in that train risking to lose a hand, a foot, I don't know what. It's also a risk because of the thieves, who show up with weapon trying to take away the little we carry to get here. That was my biggest risk I have gone through in my life. Besides being risk, it was also an adventure because I met places I've never seen before.

**-José, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It is a big risk to travel here like that. The bad thing about everything is that you risked it all for nothing. Or was it worth it?

## Drogas Malditas

Yo he mirado tanta gente que andan perdidos en las calles. Gracia a Dios yo nunca he andado metido en las droga. Solo me gusta beber cervezas, pero nunca he andado en las droga.

Nunca me gustaría que le dijeran a mi familia que yo ando metido en drogas. Primero Dios nunca use droga.

El día que llegue a usarla, pensaría en mi madre que es lo más que amo en la vida. Amo a mi familia. No me gistaría que mi familia andara en drogas.

Yo conozco a un amigo mío que andaba metido en drogas. Miro que vive en las calles sin pensar en la familia. No es justo que vengamos a consumir drogas. Pensemos en nuestras familias. Ese es el consejo que les tengo.

**From The Beat:** Lastimosamente así son las drogas te amarran hasta que ya no tienes nada en la vida. Cuando ya no tienes nada y haz perdido todo, te abandona y te deja tirado en la calle, sin familia, sin dignidad y sin ganas de vivir. Te recomendamos que nunca las pruebes. Mantente alejado!

## Damn Drugs

I've seen so many people who are lost in the streets. Thank God I've been involved into drugs. I just like beers, but never messed around with drugs.

I would never like someone to tell my family that I mess around with drugs. Hope God, I never mess with drugs.

The day I use it, I would think about my mother who I love the most in my life. I love my family. I would like my family to mess with drugs.

I know a friend of mine who was in drugs. I see that he lives in the streets without thinking about my family. It's not fair to come here to use drugs. That's the advice I have to share.

**-Tavo, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Sadly drugs hook you in until there's nothing left in your life. When you lose it all, is when you realize you have lost everything, your family, dignity and the desire to live. We recommend you to never mess with it. Keep yourself away from it.

## Es Difícil Vivir Con Los Ojos Cerrados

Que ondas Catrachos! Yo sé que no es bonito estar en la juvenile porque no todos los gusta estar encerrado y no todos estamos acostumbrados al encierro.

Hay muchas personas que dicen que con los ojos cerrados es fácil vivir que con los ojos abiertos. Pero yo pienso que es difícil vivir con los ojos cerrados porque estas semanas que he estado aquí encerrado es como que estes con los ojos cerrados porque no puedo ver lo bonito de la vida que es mi libertad.

Ahora que salga, voy a abrir los ojos para no trompezarme con lo mismo que son las droga. Ya no pienso trompezarme con eso porque quiero estar feliz con mi familia y vivir una vida mejor junto a todas las personas que quiero.

Adios! Y que Dios los bendiga a todos, a los juices, a sus familias y que les de muchos años de vida.

**From The Beat:** Nos parece que es lo mejor que puedes hacer. No hay como vivir una vida con los ojos abiertos, sin trampas ni mentiras. Tienes a una familia quien depende de ti y te desea lo mejor de todo. No los desprecies.

## It's Very Hard To Live With Your Eyes Closed

What's up Catrachos! I know it's not nice to be in juvenile hall because not all of us like to be locked up, and not all of us are used to be in lock down.

There are many people who think that living with your eyes closed is easy to live than with your eyes opened. I think it's hard to live with your eyes closed because these last weeks I've been here is like I've been living with my eyes closed because I can't see the beauty of life which is my freedom.

Now when I get out, I'm going to open my eyes to trip over the same thing because I want to be happy with my family and live a better life with the people I love.

Bye and God bless you all, judges, and their families and give you many years of life.

**-Elías, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We think that's the best you can do. There isn't such a thing than living with your eyes opened, without cheatings and lies. You have a family that depends on you and wish you the best of all. Don't disappoint them.

## Mis Padres

Quienes creen en mis son mis padres quienes son los que nunca desean un mal para mí. Siempre quieren lo mejor de mí, me apoyan en todo momento, en todo lugar, sin importar lo que haga. Mis padres son los que me aconsejan, los que me apoyan.

El ultimo abrazo me lo dió un primo. Fue abrazo de tristeza, hubo lágrimas porque lo que senti en ese abrazo fue tristeza. Estaba pensando en que no lo iba a volver a ver.

**From The Beat:** Los padres siempre van a estar ahí cuando uno más lo necesite. ¿Pero has buscado la forma como estar ahí por ellos?

## My Parents

My parents are the ones who believe in me and who would never wish the bad for me. They always want the best for me, they support me at all times, all places, without caring what I do. They are the one who advise me and support me.

My last hug was from my cousin. It was a sad hug, there were tears because I felt that hug was full of sadness. We were thinking that we weren't going to see each other.

**-Marco, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Parents will always be there when we need them. But, are you looking for ways to be there for them?

## Vivir Con Los Ojos Cerrados

Vivir con los ojos cerrados es muy diferente porque no miras la realidad de la vida. Mientras que con los ojos abiertos miras la realidad y por eso es que uno tiene más libertad de hacer muchas cosas.

A veces uno dicen que estas con los ojos cerrados porque haces cosas malas y cuando los abres es cuando te das cuentas que tienes problemas en frente. Un ejemplo mío es cuando yo vendía drogas, caminaba, creía que caminaba con los ojos bien abiertos, pero me doy cuenta que no fue así porque los narcos me agarraron vendiendo y me arrestaron.

Estar con los ojos cerrados es fácil porque te transportan a otros dimensiones del mundo diferente. Puedes sonar, hacer cosas extraordinaria, pero cuando abres los ojos, te das cuenta de la realidad. Estar aquí es triste, pero algún día saldré.

Recuerdo el último abrazo que me lo dieron mis padres y abuelos cuando decidí venirme para los Estados Unidos de mojado. Me senti feliz porque estaba con ellos y senti el amor con que ellos me abrazaron. Es bonito el amor de los padres. Ellos quieren todo lo mejor para uno. Me desearon buena suerte y se despidieron con todo el amor del mundo. Es lo más bonito que te puede suceder en la vida.

Quien cree en mí es mi abuela. Ella siempre me da consejos. Me dice que me cuide, y que no ande en cosas malas. Ahora me doy cuenta que eran buenos consejos porque estar aquí encerrado es lo peor que te puede pasar. Para que crean en tí, debes obedecer a tus padres siempre. "Haz el bien y no mires a quien."

**From The Beat:** Eso es la realidad, a veces nosotros hacemos cosas que sabemos que estan mal y nos hacemos como que no estamos viendo los errores. Siempre nos damos cuenta de la realidad hasta que estamos en situaciones muy complicadas. Siempre es bonito recibir abrazos de las persona que uno quiere. Es algo especial. Si tu abuela cree en ti ciegamente, es porque ella sabe de lo que tú estas hecho. ¡Demuéstralo!

## Living With Your Eyes Closed

To live with your eyes closed is very different because you don't see the reality if life. While living with your eyes open, you see the reality and that's how you find the freedom to do other things.

Sometimes you feel like you're living with your eyes closed because you are doing bad things, and when you open them, you realize the problems you have in front of you. An example of mine is when I used to seel drugs, I used to walk, I thought about I was walking with my eyes opened, but I realize it wasn't like that because they arrested mne selling drugs.

Being with your eyes closed is easy because they transfer you to other different dimension of the world. You can dream, do extraordinary things, but when you open them, your realized the reality. Being here is very sad, but someday I'll get out.

I remember the last hug I received was from my parents and grandparents before I decided to come to the US as an immigrant. I felt happy because I was with them and I felt the love that was shared through their hugs. The love of parents is a beautiful thing. They just want the best for us. They wished me good luck and they say goodbye to me with all the love of the world. It's the most beautiful thing that can happen to you in life.

Who believes in me is my grand mother. She gives me good advice. Now that I am here, I realize that her advice were good because being here is the worst the can happen to you. In order for them to believe in you, you have to always obey your parents. "Do well, and don't look at any other people"

**-Rosny, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** That's reality. Sometimes we do things knowing it is bad and we pretend we don't know what we are doing. We always realize about reality when we find ourselves in situations very complicated. It's always nice to receive hugs from those we love. It's something special. If your grandmother believes in you blindly, this might be because she knows what you are made of. Show it!



## Behind a Closed Door

Disciplinarian, suppressant, metallic, strong, suffocating can only characterize the steel enforcer. SLAM! Imperfectly spoken language was the response for my request for freedom. Movement was my suppressed undercurrent to strike uncommonly for an uncommitted course of action in my uncompromising position as a requestor. Not defeated, nor a runaway, but ruminating, I sank within the depths of my sink, breathing vigorously. I am extremely vigilant in disposing the arrangement of tears that escapes the windows, which my soul provides. Taciturn is my disposition, yet my sub conscience is suffering with the submergence concerning my unexpected activities and shambles my behavior.

Gradually speaking, I, "The Unknown Pen", remove he who humorlessly attains action in bringing the "claustrophobic devised mechanism down"! "Strength and solidarity is perhaps my purpose for the continuance of this in which solitude is the medium in conveying my subsequent message to those behind a closed door." As I reply an orchestrated melody not only to bring pleasure within my optimistic realm of oppression suggests "Allahu-Akbar-Allahu-Akbar". In English- "Allah is the greatest-Allah is the greatest". With the conclusion as a melodically recovering addict, I am zestful, strong, fearless, yet permissiveness is the controlling pragmatism within my persistent Balance for freedom over designed destructibility. Steadfast, I am determined to manipulate ass attributes in which I will manifest my counter attack on the steel enforcer. Nevertheless, my environment is a constant reminder that enslavement is the epitome in which my epidemic will always affect the later misguided generations to modify my position. I

Our next writer is mysteriously writing to us from Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, CA. Our unknown writer is a very educated and smart writer. He sends his regards and of course writes with the sole intentions on educating anybody who is reading. This is some real game that he brings to the table. As he signifies that education, love, and opportunity at equality will give us the power to change! Read up folks!

stretch to further more exercise my right for freedom including standing tall in representation for my Africans, Mexicans, Caucasians, Native Americans, and the remainder ethnic backgrounds. As I remodel the battlefield, justice and equality will establish a future for the up and coming generations as scholars, teachers, doctors, lawyers, judges etc., in which dreams are being deprived by "Babylonian lawman ship".

As I begin to lace my shoes effectively, knots I issue accordingly which is basis to the cause and futuristic struggle. I am summoned by the steel enforcer. "Requester, what is it you desire?" The steel enforcer replied. Before I replied, my toes met steel. My chest met glass. My eyes met "the Steel Enforcer", with "clenched fist" in which my ancestors' vibrant, pulsating-strength, beating-solidified my stance. "I desire freedom and opportunity! I desire education, I desire love, I desire equality, and I desire independence!" I replied back in a roar.

"And what will you gain from this if granted, human?" Justice! Yes, justice was my answer in response with the steel enforcers' last question for freedom.

"Your request is granted, but what shall become of you, human?" As the door began to open and I made my way towards freedom I whispered... "Change." The End

## Salutations

Before I establish and estimate the proximity of this well opposed epistle. It is by all means that I create the effect of a simulation in which a firm handshake is implemented in which these words will translate into a prayer for you and your beautiful families. I pray that God who is above all and reaches from the mighty heavens and descends a hand in which will wrap around you and your children formed from the clouds above in order to wipe away your sins, ill suffering, tears, and misfortunes. Amen.

With that said (Beat Within), please excuse my unbecoming handwriting in which the uncleanness of penmanship comes from the lack of womanly love due to the abusive and ignorant men who mistreat women in today's society and later generations. Nevertheless, one cannot blame or plunder the essential characteristics of the past mistakes abusive men made because of emotional disadvantages in ones' life. With that said I must reintroduce myself but under different provisions in which is detrimental to the cause and futuristic struggle.

As I begin to submerge within the depths of this epistle it brings great displeasure in reading the unthinkable in which a synopsis was given to lower a troubled teen within the elements of slavery despite her ambition for freedom. To humanly identify your diagnosis in which a proper term used would be "stupor" on grounds of being conscious but not aware or sensible. Sadness was you undercurrent by imposing resistance against an "optimistic teen", stating: "All we can say is that you should get your sights way higher than America's Next Top Model. It's not that different being a piece of meat for T.V. than being a piece of meat out on the streets. What makes you? Is it the pretty face or body?"

Redolently speaking, what makes her is her heart, her ambition, a willingness to change, and her beliefs in which shouldn't be tampered with in any form or fashion whether or not her position within this systematic struggle is evident. The piece I am referring to is entitled: "What's Driving Me Crazy" by: Da' Baddest within the Alameda County section volumes 13-25, page 19.

Furthermore, becoming America's Next Top Model is subjectively far more important to the "millions" of women of all ages whether her background is African American, Caucasian, financial class,

or employment is concerned. The independent women have shaped lives by bearing hardships and struggles a model must go through to gain success. These women or heroes that take part in unhealthy diets, disrespect, discrimination, suppression, but yet remain beautiful whether accepted or eliminated.

Nevertheless, to characterize a woman as apiece of meat is and will always keep my "Queens" from reaching independence and from removing the bandage of criticism. As you know, a woman who subjects herself to prostitution isn't a ho', but an individual who is blinded, uneducated, depressed and traumatized by conflicting forces in which "financial slavery" is a "common denominator" in today's society.

Without further slander upon these two characters I hope in the near future you remain steadfast or seek knowledge on situation that are, perhaps, symbolic.

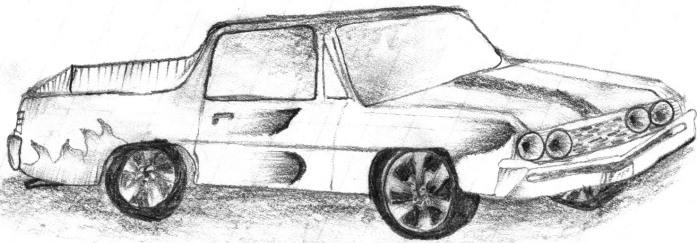
Nonetheless, metaphysics and rudimentary is an excellent equation which equals an elementary principle in shaping troubled teens' lives your organization, "my dear Watson". I, for one, can only give a rough estimation on value, size or cost that your organization has played within this movement.

Splendidly, your organization has brought teens from out the shadows of unconsciousness into a world that equals enlightenment by the works of a pen. "The pen is mightier than the sword". It is truly a great honor to reintroduce myself as "The Unknown Pen"

With that said, I highly recognize the four issues your organization forwarded me (Volume 13.25-13.28), with keen appreciation, hoping that I am blessed to receive more outstanding issues in the near future, with these two valuable missives I have forwarded-added to a Beat Within (please) in which is needed for readers to view as a source of enlightenment within the struggle. Also, (please) do not edit. Sorry that I am unable to forward any stamps or donations because of indigent status, but words of wisdom I will always contribute.

In regards of respect, (Beat Within) I send to you and your families, writers and viewers around the world who have collaborated within this movement and to all those who are incarcerated "behind a closed door".

Peace, Love and Respect...



Our next writer is writing to us from Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, CA. Jaime got started in the system as a juvenile offender like a lot of young readers out there. He went from the halls, to hillcrest, and now he finds himself in Pelican Bay. He has a lot of wisdom and knowledge so you readers out there have to pay attention. Without anymore stalling from us let us introduce to you Jaime B.

## Reality Check pt. 1

Dedicated to all Beat Within contributors and personnel who search for a piece of truth within.

Life continues to go on  
 Even behind these walls  
 As I remain standing strong  
 Others around me fall  
 Facing consequences  
 Very grim and out of touch  
 Erasing all happiness  
 The saints have run their luck  
 So many nights, dark and cold  
 Spent alone indeed  
 This wasteland I call my home  
 A future is hard to see  
 Grieving for the days gone  
 Wishing to return  
 Unto my days of child youth  
 Slowly I let it burn  
 With what I reap I shall sow  
 Torments most in vein  
 The sirens cast warning shots  
 Bangers do the same  
 Shady statistics of what we are  
 Behind an electric fence  
 Many will die or be abused  
 Some shall repent  
 A few will choose a warriors path  
 Yet most will fall astray  
 A great many will see the SHU  
 Extended years and days  
 A burden house, callous, I've accepted  
 In all endeavors complete  
 Still I rise into the heights  
 Of a monster's creed  
 Allow my words to touch your heart  
 Enticing the sharpest mind  
 Allow them to inspire  
 Generations who are blind  
 I'm only human, a living relic  
 Of what has been and is  
 I am the first, I am the last  
 In touch with focus  
 The things I see of a heinous world  
 Many could never feel  
 The sharp wounds of battle scars  
 Mend though never heal  
 So stand strong knowing the slogan  
 "Two to the neck"  
 This small piece of my struggle  
 Is your reality check.

## To the Editor Of The Beat Within

Cordial Salutations of monumental reverence and esteemed honor: symmetrical to endowments of extreme love. Integrity and strength are conveyed with whole-hearted conviction to all Beat Within staff, contributors and personnel upon the entirety of this message; for giving life and reason to the voices of the wind... of a society shun from existence, crying out to be heard and felt! For it is through your magazine's encouragement and enlightening topics in which many of our young lost souls become consciously aware of our own divine gifts and a lessons of a purposeful and productive life...

As I will formally introduce myself, my name is Jaime Barros. Also known as Syks. I'm a resident of South San Francisco. Born and bred... Yet as one can see I'm currently locked down in Pelican Bay State Prison-B-yard. I will remain so for a very long time to come, which comes as a reflection of my own past mistakes.

Now, for many years I have been an avid reader of The Beat Within from my days in Hillcrest, through C.Y.A. and onto prison, which forever remains unfortunate. Yet I have always enjoyed reading through its context. There is so much to gain and learn through the articulate scripts the Beat's so many young and elderly writers compose. Within California and into outside states, our struggles live.

Within the 29 years I have lived through, this is my first dedicated message and poem submitted to any formal newsletter. Though I've written in such eloquent style since my early teenage years, I've never been willing to reach out and share it with my world of peers. In order to advance in life one must adapt to change. With change come many lessons. Those that offer us experience and allow us to grow within, thus reaching a higher order of intellect, called wisdom, something we, as humans, all possess within our being, the innate wisdom of life. It's time for each of us to stand and devote our energies and time to the accomplishment of our greatest objective, breaking the cycle of "self-inflicted oppression". I am a product of my 'hood and environment does not mean I am limited to just that. This applies to all others, as well, yet most are blinded by that thick haze of smoke and fog.

As I've previously stated, I've hereby dedicated this letter and enclosed poem to the management of the Beat Within in hopes it might be published in an upcoming issue. And to lend my experience, aspirations and strength to all other writers of the Beat, in hopes that such characteristics act as a tool to them in achieving growth and freedom.

I will continue to write and dedicate many future writings to the Beat. Count on it. So until next time, one heart, one body, one mind

The Beat Within Continues on!

*I will continue to write and dedicate many future writings to the Beat.*

## Prop 6 and Prop 9

Greetings to all at The Beat Within for providing an outlet for the youth to express themselves is definitely a noble endeavor. Kudos my friends, my name is Henry Haro, and I am a prisoner housed at Pelican Bay SHU. I write to convey an important message that will, if allowed to become law, negatively impact your readers and participants.

The "Aggrandizers" are at it again! Once more come November the public is going to be fed another anti-minority (viz. Raza and Blacks) agenda, in the guise of Prop 6 and 9 (The Safe Neighborhood Act-runner initiative) formally named "Criminal Penalties and Laws. Public Safety Funding. Statute." The same way they sold the Three-Strikes-You're-out Law, by eliciting fear and apocalyptic type propaganda, they are now moving to further strengthen their oppressive ideology by exploiting the unsuspecting and uninformed public to support their take-over of government regulation over the prison industry.

What this means is that laws or just sentencing schemes. The effects will be two fold:

1. A been for prison guards union, prison contractors, private prison industries, organizations that advocate for stiffer sentencing, more prisons, and harsher laws to enable them to regulate power, etc. And

2. The further fleecing of the tax payers, the diversion of funds from health care and education to the prison industry, the weakening of the newly evolving voting power of the Raza and Blacks by effectively disenfranchising hundreds of thousands- extending into the millions if this trend continues into the future, and the destruction of the family culture of the Raza and the Blacks.

Moreover, what's being hidden from the public is the direct effect that Prop 6 and 9- over the already ten billion dollar annual budget to the prison industry-plus added millions of dollars onto the annual budget thereafter, the huge cost increase in prisoners' health care for the aging populous brought about the incarceration from such laws as the three strikes law where the vast majority of strikers were prosecuted for petty non-violent crimes. The construction of more prisons to house those awaiting trial in city and county jails, and the huge cost for the many lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of these unjust propositions. To the point, the Aggrandizers are circumventing the constitution with the pretense of supporting victims' rights.

Now the bad news, where's the money to pay for all this coming from? From "you" the already struggling public of course! And through the reduction in funding and access to Public Health Care- which is already responsible for the over 18,000 annual deaths nation wide, the reduction in funding for education and educational system where its students are performing poorly by comparison to other nations where the U.S.A. is 24th to other nations in math and science and sits at the bottom among the industrialized nations. Note: Just 20 years ago the U.S.A. was "first" among all nations. At this rate the future of the nation looks rather dim.

Attention. The irony is that Henry Nichols III (Principal behind Prop 6 and 9) is himself involved in criminal activity. He's been "indicted on 20 federal drug, prostitution,

Our next writer is writing to us from Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, CA. Henry really digs our publication because of the fact that we let the youth express themselves. We let everybody express them selves as long as it's appropriate. And that's exactly what Henry does. His words are a political attacking campaign saying vote no for Prop. 6 and 9. Henry does a good job writing up his report mixing it up with facts and throwing in his own two cents. So please give it up for Henry and listen to the message he is trying to convey.

and bribery charges. His criminal charges range from distributing illegal drugs, spiking the drinks of technology execs with ecstasy; giving drugs to prostitutes he hired to entertain Broadcom customers, spiking the drinks of business associates (ecstasy) without their knowledge, using threats of physical violence and death and payments of money to attempt to conceal his unlawful conduct, and cheating his stockholders of millions."

[Source: FACTS STRIKER].

And now Henry Nichols is attempting to deceive the public by posing as a concerned citizen, along with his other hypocritical cronies, to push for more unjust laws to further incarcerate those of a particular skin pigmentation and particular social status, i.e. the Raza, Blacks, and underprivileged Whites.

The following is a partial list of provisions there in Prop 6 and 9, according to FACTS: Prop 6- "14 years will be tried as adults and placed in adult prisons. "Young men and women will be labeled gang members if they: know a gang member, live next door to one, go to school with them, or are in the same family as one, wear certain clothing (usually what's in style) ID'd by someone in a gang, are arrested with a gang member, etc. Prop 9- " Is written to prohibit the early release of law risk prisoners in order to alleviate overcrowding, under any circumstances." Prop 9 threatens the right of due process and legal representation for parolees.

"It limits judicial discretion on setting restitution, permits, hearsay evidence and prohibits cross examination of witness at parole revocation hearings. And any future amendments or the over turning of laws would exempt those already sentenced from any benefits of such passages.

These propositions will pull law enforcement and prison policy, away from everything which could reduce gang violence, like education, prevention programs, intervention, jobs, job training, etc. [Source: FACTS STRIKER].

With a state that places more emphasis on building prisons and incarceration numbers, over building more schools and vigorously promoting adequate educational development, it's no wonder that our nation has nurtured a generation of mediocrity. The big question: Does the public continue to cede power to the Aggrandizers? Or, do the public regain the power of the people and exhort their congressional reps to legislate common sensibly, reminding them that they hold the power in their vote?

Concerned citizens are the power brokers; believe in that power to prevail. PROTECT YOUR FUTURE! URGE OTHERS TO VOTE NO ON PROP 6 AND 9! Believe in your potential, we are what we think-think positive of yourself and a positive you will manifest. The best of luck!

*Believe in your potential, we are what we think-think positive of yourself and a positive you will manifest. The best of luck!*



## My Slice Of The Political Pie

Until recently, it's been years since I've followed or cared about politics. Come on, I'm a lifer, not even an American citizen, not even a good citizen, if I was to be. Come on, so why should I concern myself with what happens out there somewhere, and who wins the election? My lot has been cast, my choice made, my earthly fate sealed: LWOP, end of story. Plus, I promised myself that I would not write about politics, but I will write about life.

These are the weeks of political conventions, and all the presidential hoopla. Yes, the voters will get to select the next leader, who will usher in something so spectacular, that...well, you know the punch line. For me, in mathematical terms, the choice is "a" or "+a", but it's still "a." in the well-oiled political machine of the current two-party system, it's "the same soup, just a different bowl." That's my humble opinion.

Power corrupts. Even the best people with the best intentions, as they move up the ladder of power, affluence, and influence, are often forced to compromise, say things they don't mean, and mean things they don't say. Think of the high school "homecoming dance" (or the prom, or whatever) where the winners get decked out and have to "look pretty" in clothes they may not necessarily like. In politics, it's called "being electable," and so the candidates cease to be men and women of convictions, principles, and conscience, but have to "win" the approval of various ethnic, ideological, economic groups, and promise a million promises that they will be unable to deliver once the real world political gridlock sets in. plus, you can't win unless you get with the party line.

The higher one climbs on the ladder, the thinner the air, the more favors you owe to those who helped you to get there. The farther you go, the more you have to pay the piper once you get to where you're going. This is a basic reality of two-party politics, where one is forced to "get with the program," or else...or else, you can be a third party candidate" who will get no more than 5% of the vote in November, and will be a spoiler for the big boys, who will not even allow you to share the same debate room during the campaign. Everything costs money, hundreds of millions of dollars, and so the charade continues until the American people will wake up to more than bread and circus, and begin to demand true justice, not the mere appeasement of the masses.

I love America because she adopted me and my family, when our homeland disowned us. I love her even when I disagree with her politics and falsehoods. My faith teaches me to be a good prisoner, no matter if I'm a "citizen" or not, and to be a positive factor in my society whether free or captive. That is not the issue. What is at stake is your future, not mine. The young people of America are throwing away their future (like I threw away mine!) by disqualifying themselves from the electoral process.

Our next writer is the infamous Markhasev. Most of you should be familiar with this primetime writer, because he is consistently dropping knowledge on us every week. He is a man of his word, and we are honored to share his insightful thoughts each week. Usually his the topics he writes about are about life lessons and all the obvious lessons he's learned on his journey. He educates us readers and constantly has us thinking. But this week he puts on his political thinking cap on and gives everyone his slice of the political pie. Still some great writing from Mikhail Markhasev, which is very much appreciated

You can determine who is in charge, how we will live, and where we will be headed as a nation, yet you are picking up felonies, prison numbers, and parole agents, thereby locking yourselves out of the voting booth! What is going on? Why did only 49% of eligible voters show up at the polls in 2004, yet almost everyone now complains about "our leaders?"

If you did not vote, when you could have voted, then your choice was made for you by someone else. Eat your mush and hush. If you're in juvy, get out, stay out of trouble and seal your record after you turn 18. If you're in prison, stay out of trouble, and teach your kids to do what they have to do in order to be real people. But, before all that, we have to teach ourselves.

I am not saying anything new, and I am not the one to talk, since I haven't contributed anything good to this country and to it's people. But, what I am saying is you can learn from my mistakes, and do what I failed in. life is not a game, and the people's choice is a precious privilege, not a given right. Many men and women had to shed their blood in order for everyone to have an equal vote today. Don't trample their blood.

Last week, a little lady from the "California Prison Focus," Penny Schoner, came for a surprise visit here, at Corcoran. This was a first for me, but when I heard this 74-year-old "activist" speak, I was impressed by what she said. "As long as I can walk," said Ms. Schoner, "I will continue to demand that the CDCR obeys the law and follows the rules. People are dying here..." I have never thought of myself as an "activist," nor am I certain that I'd make much of an activist, but unless we take even small steps to change the world the better and redeem what is given to us, then others will do it in a way that seems pleasing to them.

MLK Jr. said, "the only thing required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." There is a telling sign about the future, when both of the front-running presidential candidates were asked the question, "Does evil exist and how would you define it?" One said that "we see evil all the time," but vague in defining it. The other the other promised to pursue evil (which he linked to Osama Bin Laden) to "the gates of hell."

Dear friends I don't know about our esteemed candidates, but I see evil in myself, and pray for strength to fight against it. For me, the primary responsibility is not to become what I condemn, and making sure that my "slice of the pie" doesn't poison others.

## TAINTED LOVE

A broken-hearted love stain embedded deep

Puncturing vital memories

Feeling like hot glass to the touch of a fingertip

Ripped from the inside out to fine lil' pieces, bit by bit

Not like confetti (too happy), but more like shreds (dreading)

This masterpiece you call love, a dark dove

You are cursed with beauty, with eyes the color of mud

The aroma of her presence, brought the sweet essence of blood

With a lingering smell of tainted love.

## CONTRITE

Our next writer is sending these poems from a Correctional Facility in San Bernadino, CA. Contrite has been a loyal writer to The Beat Within for awhile now. He always comes through with unique and special writings. He does a good job painting pictures of his emotions and feelings.

## INTRICATE

I seen myself as a visionary if life's pathway

Anger forgone to commit destruction

Sidewalks the color of burnt skin-my skin

Crimson sky, dead clouds of, and full of death's inspiration

Searing pain no longer an option in this womb of seeping drip drops of eternal reigning fire

Manic everlasting bliss for my desire!

## Where Did It All Go Wrong?

What's up, Beat readers? What's the word? I'm gonna drop a story about my past history, where I came from, grew up, and where I would like to go in the future. Although some people's stories may be blown up, or exaggerated, I'd like to drop some real life experiences with no exaggeration. This is only a fraction of the whole story. Feel me. I'd like to share some true events, something the readers might enjoy and relate to. I hope by sharing my story the readers will take it to heart.

Throughout my life I've met many types of people and characters, gangsters, drug dealers, addicts, shot callers, rappers, artists. I've pushed pounds of weed, ounces of coke, glass, chiva, LSD, shrooms. Seen a lot of places, met gangstas from east to west coast. If you're from a varrio, set, or hood I've probably heard about it.

My name is Cain, and I've been going by that name since I was 15. It's a nickname that I believe defines me and my character. I was born on Cinco de Mayo 1981 in Las Cruces, New Mexico at Memorial Medical Center. Born William Matthew but my family called me Matt. Brown hair, hazel eyes. My mom says I was drama since birth. To this day we still have our separate views on life. My dad split before I was born back to where he lived in Long Beach, California. My mom was faced with a difficult situation, so she decided to marry her best friend at the time, Alec, and her and him were gonna raise me.

He signed as my dad on the birth certificate. When I was 3 my mom filed for divorce from Alec. I remember the break up, fight, yelling, crying, cops got called. I wanted to stay with Alec, who I thought was my dad, but the police made me go with my mom. The judge ordered split visitation. The divorce finalized. My mom eventually remarried when I was five.

My mom called me in one day, showed me a picture of a guy named Glenn, a golf shop owner in Long Beach, California, still to this day, and said, "This is your real dad." So the guy I thought was my dad for five years wasn't. You can imagine what this did to me emotionally. And so my problems began.

The first time I stole big was like \$200 from my baby-sitter, and took it to school. Someone told on me, and she got most of the money back. My mom's new husband, Craig, coached an undefeated soccer team I was on called Cobras. We weren't just unbeatable; the entire season no one scored one goal on us. Around the same time I got a new baby brother, Logan. We are night and day. In the same period I almost died. My mom left me in her Blazer outside of a market to go in and buy some lettuce. I was like 4 or 5. I got into her purse and started lighting matches and blowing them out. I lit a Kleenex tissue on the floor board, but the flame was too big for me to blow out. A big fire started. I couldn't get out because the doors were too hard for me to open. The windows rolled up, I was crying, pounding, screaming on the window. While the fire grew bigger behind me, a Hispanic lady walking by saw me. She opened the door and pulled me out. It was way too late for the truck; the floor, dash, and seat were on fire. We had a dog in the back, but it got too hot and he jumped out. The lady took me inside to my mom.

To this day, I don't know who she is or her name. God sent me an angel. If I knew who she was, I would like to thank her for saving my life. Later on Craig and my mom got a divorce. I once again went with my moms. Eventually I came out to Cali to have blood tests done with my real dad and to meet him. As my mom had said, Glenn was my real dad. It was hard on my mom raising two kids alone on welfare. I was feeling the effects. I started getting into trouble, running away from home and school, stealing.

One day I said I couldn't take it anymore and didn't want to live with her. My only option was to live with Alec. So I went to live with him and his new wife. It was OK at first, but an abusive childhood began, mentally and physically. They began beating me with belts, the metal part, punching me. I cut my

Our next writer is writing to us from Salinas Valley State Prison in Soledad, CA. William sent us an incredible story for us to publish. He really put down for us this week. He tells a raw and uncut story, but with a positive message behind it. "Where Did It All Go Wrong?" We're sure that's a question that we all ask ourselves at some point in time in our life. Listen to William's story and let him tell you his story and maybe you can learn from some of the mistakes he made. Maybe you don't have to find out on your own, that this life doesn't get you anywhere! Take it from William!

arms and threatened suicide to get away. I was placed in a mental hospital for kids and teens, psychiatric treatment. A couple people that were there with me tried escaping.

I eventually came back to Alec's and the abuse continued. Then my mom came to see me at school and seen I had 4 or 5 belt marks on my back, almost drawing blood. That was enough to get me placed back with my real mom. I had to leave everything behind and start new. Alec wouldn't let me get any of my things. I lost a collection of sports cards that today would be worth bank. I remember I had a school binder with plastic sheets filled with all Michael Jordan cards. I used to race BMX and had to leave my bike and all my trophies and gear.

I had a real tough childhood. I only got into one fight my sixth grade school year with a guy named Chris G., AKA News. Later on I met up with him in high school; we started to kick it. He also had a rough childhood, not with his family but outside. He got stabbed with an ice pick when he was 11, shot at a grip of times. He still has the shotgun BBs in his back. I finished the school year and transferred to Zia Middle School from Vista. I played football and sports, but I still had issues. I never went back to Alec's though. I did get to come out and visit with my real dad in summers.

Problems continued even at my mom's. I contemplated running away and one night I did. I broke into my neighbor's house down the block and stole as many guns as I could carry, an AK-47, shotgun, 22 long rifle, 357, 44 Magnum, and two 23 pistols. I loaded them up in my mom's car at 4:30 a.m. and started the motor on the '93 Buick Regal. I pulled away, and remember seeing a cop car on my street as I drove off. I headed for the only place I could think of, Mexico. I spent the night in El Paso, Texas, falling asleep at the wheel once and almost crashing under a semi truck. I had the shotgun and 22 rifle loaded up with bullets in the passenger seat. I didn't have any bullets for the A-K. If I got pulled over I was going out like a soldier. I never did. I may not be alive, or have a release date today, if I would of got stopped. When I approached the Mexican border the next day, I decided to walk over, but as I was reading the signs I missed my exit, and as the traffic merged I found myself driving into Mexico with a car full of guns.

At the last second there was a parking space where people go get papers to go deep into Mexico. I parked the car there, and was never noticed. I decided to leave the car and try to walk over into Juarez, Mexico. I'd been there before with my family, so I knew where the big market was. They sell blankets, rugs, and things. I met a Mexican guy named Armando. He asked me if I was solo and I said yeah. Because I spoke good English, he offered me a job because I could speak with the Americans real easy. Although the pay was little, I made ten cents on the dollar, if the owner bought sandals for \$2 and I sold them for \$3, I only made 10¢ on the sandals.

Later on I began to travel back and forth from work to a motel where I only paid \$6 a night, but I shared a room with another guy. I told Armando I had an AK-47. He told me to bring it. I went back to where the car was parked, folded the gun butt on the gun, and put the AK into a bag. I walked an AK-47 across the U.S. border into Mexico. I stayed there a couple weeks. I met a friend who I worked with. He took me to a club called EXO. We got separated and I found myself walking the streets at two in the morning. I started getting real sick, throwing up, and was chased by a rabid dog. I decided to come

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home, no money. I had a sack of Bud my friend gave me; I just threw it away, I was so sick.

I got a ride back to Las Cruces and slept outside in a ditch. I eventually turned myself in and was arrested for a number of felonies.

In Juvy I kicked it with a couple of guys I went to school with and started claiming a gang called Green Rag I was jumped in. I met another guy I went to school with who was also an East Sider, Matthew. We kicked it and he put me up on game. Nobody had as fast hands as he did. When he was like seventeen he allegedly shot a guy in a street fight and killed him. He was backing up his cousin John. Even though John is from another gang, Southside, these guys were like brothers. The difference in color of rag and the gangs didn't come between family.

Matthew is currently doing his sentence for the alleged shooting in a correctional facility in New Mexico. My respects go out to him, and I hope he gets out one day. I know that he is a good person. The ruling was sort of self defense, I believe, and he got 17 years.

I spent 3 months in Juvy, then went to YDDC in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Some of The Beat writers in New Mexico are probably familiar with YDDC. Waking up at 6 A.M., having to run a mile before breakfast; it's like boot camp. Eventually I got out and placed on probation. I met a graffiti artist named "WEMF," which stands for Wicked Eluding Mental Friction, who taught me how to piece and another way of thinking and living other than gang bangin.

Although issues with moms continued, she kicked me out of the house, I ended up moving in with two girls, Jenn and Mags. I slept on their couch.

One day their apartment got raided over some weed and that was the end of that.

I joined a traveling magazine crew called "Ultimate Power." I lied and said I was 18. I met a lot of people and traveled to more than twenty states. I remember this pretty girl on crew named Jamie. At the time she had a boyfriend, but in the back of my mind I wanted to hook up with her. Ken and Brandon, magazine reps, taught me all about the business.

There's a pitch that you say you're selling 101 flavors of edible underwear. Always a joke. I got tired of selling magazines in the rain, so I caught a bus back to New Mexico. I was smoking a lot of weed, jacking, and began getting into cocaine. I was selling it for awhile for a guy named "Too Fresh." Then one day he gave me a lot of coke to sell and a bad business deal went down and I lost the coke. I didn't have the money to pay it back, and if I didn't leave town I was gonna get smoked. No lie. By him or his cousin JC a.k.a. "Tech," and I'm sure you could guess why his a.k.a. is Tech or Tek.

I called up my mom who had moved to Phoenix, Arizona, and said if I don't get out of Cruces, I'm gonna get shot. She got me on a bus to Arizona. I didn't have any place to stay, though. I found myself living on the street jacking, stealing, and getting high, selling LSD. I went back to Cruces selling all kinds of hits to my friends, Buds and J.R. When I got back to Arizona, my lifestyle continued living on the streets. I was shot at, robbing and burning people. Then one day I hit a house with a safe and inside was forty-four thousand in jewelry. No lie.

Eventually my crime spree came to an end when I attempted to burglarize a house in Phoenix. I knew it was all over for me. They linked me to like 10 houses. More guns in a house, I stole six rifles. At the jail the attorney asked if I had hid the jewelry. It had been sold and partied up, drugs, hotels, probably not even at half the real cost.

In the police report it stated one ring was estimated at \$12,000. A diamond embedded 20k saffire ring. Another 1960 class ring, \$800. I went to prison for two and a half years. I remembered all the times I was out, like I used to cruise in a '98 Chevy Cavalier on roadsters chrome with my homie, Oscar. That was when I was into low lows. I like Euro cars now, Pirelli

tires, airbags, and rims. The cruising spot in Las Cruces, New Mexico, is "El Paseo" Albuquerque, "Central" Phoenix, Arizona, "Thomas" and in Southern California in Orange County "Bristol." You'll find all the rides, and honey's out there.

County and prison was drama. Although I'm white, who I was and a part of me still is, made a choice to run with the Raza. Juvy was another thing. Yeah, I was throwing it up, but prison is a whole nother trip. It was difficult at times, but I was true to mine, so I was accepted. The California prison is different than Arizona or New Mexico. It's a constant war zone. North vs. South vs. Bulldogs vs. Black and Whites. It's no joke. Throughout the two and a half years in Arizona I attempted to do good, but drama followed, finding myself on a level four yard with anyone from car thieves to straight killers doing life.

I called Glenn, my dad, in California one year prior to me getting out. He offered me a new start and a job. I was all for it. Things got off on a bad start. Although he drives a Benz convertible, lives in a two story house with a pool, our relationship was rocky. He was going through a divorce when I first came out. He went out to Las Vegas on a weekend, and I found the key to the Benz and took it out joy riding. I was smoking meth, and trouble really started to catch up with me.

Eventually he got fed up and booted me to the street. I broke back into the house and stole twelve gee's worth of golf equipment. I was arrested two weeks later on 12-23-02. Because I had previous felonies in Arizona, I was facing 25 to life, 3 strikes in California. I could not believe my life was coming to an end, or it was over.

In jail I was faced with a decision again in California, who to click up with. I was held in medium-high max in Orange County jail yellow band, running with the Southside Car. Mandatory routine, exercise, roll-us, where you have to roll up any opposing threat or varrio members with green lights. It's on sight. I thought I was never going home. Then I got a break, a plea bargain for six years probation and ten months county jail. I jumped on it from 25 with an L.

Once again God saved me and I got another chance. I did my time and I got out. Heading back to the street, I decided to stay clean and for the first time in my life, I bought a car that wasn't stolen, rented an apartment. I thought I was never gonna have bad times again. My world changed one morning when I woke up. My car got towed and I couldn't find it. I was late to work because of the bus and lost my job. Finally the place I was staying booted me for no reason. Usually things go bad when you're doing bad. I gave up on myself. Once again back to my old ways. I wrote my first letter to The Beat, "Never Give Up," because here I am doing almost a ten year sentence.

This time I've been down I've been sliced with a razor, jumped, stabbed with a Bic pen four times, my nose broke, and had over 12 stitches put in. I decided to give the gang life up on the inside forever. I probably wouldn't be going home if I didn't. I'm on an S an Y yard. Think positive, be positive. I draw and write rhymes everyday. I plan to follow my dreams. A lot of these young guys, and older guys, follow your heart. I'm not gonna say do this or don't do that because that's all you hear all day. Just remember every action has a reaction. Stay true to your dreams and be real with yourself.

Life can be positive or negative. The sacrifice is up to you. Ball or fall. I've seen the geez and G's, cars, dope on the evil side. Now I want to make millions on the legit side. Like 2pac said, "Picture me rolling flashing rims on a Benz that isn't stolen." I still have a chance, even though my life has been rough. I don't have any hate or animosity towards some of my family for never being there, and others giving up or burning me. That would just slow my roll. I'ma leave you with some lyrics and some inspiration and hope. That concludes my story of where did it all go wrong.

continued on next page



## Where Did It All Go Wrong (Rap)

*Author's note: This rap is dedicated to Sean B. (Soul). My payers and love go out to him, his wife and two baby girls in Phoenix, Arizona. He taught me how to rap, but not just rap but to create a positive message that will impact lives.*

When our brains combine we bring mad lyrical rhyme  
 Straight from the mind  
 You can take our tapes and push rewind  
 and what you'll find is the effect just baked your mind  
 Stack geez, make cheese  
 Uncle Sam will leave you sick with a disease  
 Your back arched like MCY D's MC's poetic theme crave cream  
 This is how it beez  
 Freestyling while I sip on a raspberry 32 oz. Superfreeze  
 Make the non believers believe  
 I believe it's all achievable on the mike  
 With more hope than Robbie Kenivel on his pop's bike  
 When we're spitting you and me the God lyrically written  
 Music is vibe  
 Vibe is feeling everything  
 Everything is life

Drug dealing, and jacking I need a career change  
 Playing the game criminally insane trying to maintain  
 Chemical dependencies marijuana my only remedy  
 Rhyme connetic, cash no credit  
 All you see is my hazard lights too brite  
 Blazing northern lights on the turnpike  
 Chemicals, outlasting MC's, a new dream, legit, trees,  
 I cripple skemes, I'm bombing like a Japanese comacoz  
 airstrike Recover the fumble, out of the rubble, double vision  
 College tuition, the incrypted message in a bottle  
 I've only just begun to touch the throttle  
 I'll be in L. A. rapping for benefits  
 Tell me what the limit is.  
 Where did it all go wrong?  
 The world dropping bombs, flammable napalm  
 Tell me where it all went wrong, hope awaits dropping  
 knowledge With metaphorical reason, kick session the  
 world's breathing  
 Where did it all go wrong?  
 Clones drones chemically genetically transformed  
 It's never too late to pick up the pieces of our youth  
 Fuse the news don't lose the clues  
 Evident I'm heaven sent, negative aspects irrelevant  
 Where did it all go wrong?

*Tell me where it all went wrong, hope awaits dropping knowledge With metaphorical reason, kick session the world's breathing  
 Where did it all go wrong?*

## Before It's Too Late

I know you don't want to hear a sad story because you are doing your thang! So I will cut through the B-S and get straight to it. You got your whole life ahead of you and in time everything will be revealed. Here's a few helpful hints on your journey.

Did you know that your juvenile record can be close, d and once you turn 18 your record is clean?

Prisons have continued to grow and grow. So this shhh is a business (modern day slavery, and guess who's the slaves? Did you know that out of every 40 people entering these CA pens 20% drop out, 20% become dope fiends, 20% become religious, 20% become homosexual and 10% become informants. Do the math only 10 of you will stay down and walk the walk. So if you plan on doing this for life that's what you are up against.

I want all of you to find one of your reputable older homeboys in prison or out and ask them these five questions:

Who's gonna send me packages, money and visit the rest of my life?

How long before I become one of the leaders of the gang?

Who's gonna take care of my girl while I'm gone?

How many homies on level fewer prisons (max) really say it's cool and that's where they want to be.

Tell me the good and bad about this life because lying to me will only come back to haunt you.

I thank you for your time and dedication.

## MR. DANIELS

Our next writer is sending us his work from California Corrections Institute in Tehachapi, CA. Our friend Mr. Daniels use to be in that same thug mentality that a lot of you are in today. He is now 37 years old and still knee-deep in the system. And he wants to ask you readers, how long are planning on living like this? How much time of your life do you want to give to the system? There are better ways to live life. Let Mr. Daniels game you up on some real talk folks.

*Tell me the good and bad about this life because lying to me will only come back to haunt you.*

## To The Beat Within

Greetings from the bowels of the beast. First off, I want to extend my regard and appreciations to you guys for doing the work you do and to let you know I received my first issue the other day and was very impressed with what you guys do. I see a lot of myself in these young cats coming up in those juvenile detentions. Young, wild not a care in the world, thinking I know it all. Mean mugging and thugging never wanting to let anyone get close to the real me. So I can relate to a lot of what was said.

I'm 37 years old now and that was 25 years ago. (Boy how time flies) My story isn't the blueprints to how to change, it's like most others, but what I would to do is scratch the surface and hopefully get the next generation to think.

## Life is a Cell

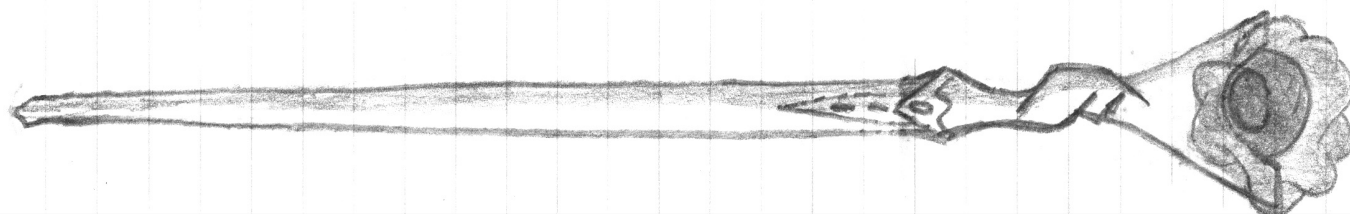
My life is a cell  
Experience a lifetime of hell  
A self-imposed hole time is where my soul doth dwell  
I mean it can't just be me  
'Cause individually  
The good seem to die young like they received some kind of reprieve  
Figuratively, I simply can't wait 'till the day I bleed  
Weight on the street calls me like AT&T  
I refuse to believe, there ain't no heaven after this shhh  
Young and pissed pits  
Can't find freedom in slit wrists  
How my ghost gonna feel?  
If I can't leave my daughter my knowledge?  
I trail-blazed the way to show where pitfalls is  
Dear Sassy  
Your daddy tried like hell to make you happy  
But like clotted colostomy bags, the situ' grew to be crappy  
I let greed get ahead of my need to feed my family  
Thought I was better than the rest  
So I invested in G's, family  
Jury's lookin' at me like, "I can't believe he breeds families!"  
Disgust in their eyes  
They hate the way I breathe, family  
They view my gang tattoos, the marks of the local idiot  
And know that pity fo' the guilty is treason to the innocent  
In some shhh  
It's a risk  
Life's a cell  
It's a witch  
This is the end result of a Mexican who got whipped  
'Wit broomsticks  
I guess, "Pride proceeds a fall," it's true, 'cause the shoe fits  
Too bad it took me so long to figure out what the truth is  
My block is hot  
Like five dirty glocks in a stolen IROC  
Parked in front of my spot  
After knots popped, in recent homicides  
You besta' run wit' a hundred guys, if you plan to surprise  
Wit' Calicos, fo' fives  
Desert Eagles  
Shadow people in visions got me tweekin' with ammunition  
Running from my Daly Avenue to the district of the Mission  
I wanna' splurge like Hammer  
Bang hammers  
Started from bammer  
Slangin' grammars of dirt weed that was harsher than cancer  
Having hellas singles and fives  
Fives and tens, when you age ten  
All you think about is what you ain't have

Our next writer is probably one of the all times best with lyrics when it comes to The Beat Without (BWO). Ray has been putting it down for ages. A real soild dude with some street cred who is really putting his heart and soul into his writings and trying to get some of y'all to really think about what y'all want to do. 'Cause Ray was caught up in the street life just like a lot of you young cats out there, and look at where he's at now! He's doing life in Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga, CA. So peep out Ray's flow and take heed to some of the advice he throws at you!

And what your homies is havin'  
My best friend an only child was spoiled rotten  
I wasn't hatin' on what he had  
I was just mad that I got nothin'  
Life is a cell, built wit' bricks of yo' crummy decisions  
And my prison began construction  
the day my dad's weed went missing  
And just like one plus one equals two; I did that math  
And it seemed like the key to my happiness was in that bag

## Life is a cell

Homey, I'm locked in a cell  
built wit' the bricks of my mind  
A brick at a time  
Flipped quarter bricks, figga', a zip at a time  
Lil' homey held a grudge like I held a nine  
Insecure wit' my manhood, I held a nine all the time  
Unsure of my livelihood 'cause I was surrounded by slime,  
plus  
I'm tastin' my own product  
The powder that rocked up  
Evolved from bammer weed to havin' thug's 'hoods shot up  
Defensive maneuvers pre-emptive 'cause I was inventively demented  
Who wanna' short change a Latin?  
Who Swiss cheese houses and fences?  
Laced weed paranoid  
Had me watchin' for haters  
Hear spooked cats whisperin' 'bout crack heads wit' Katers  
Ya' boy lived fast like high powered slugs from guns  
And hyped out NASCAR stars  
Racing off high powered drugs  
Rolled wit' high powered parolees who wasn't givin' a what  
Had many hollow relationships where all I was given was but  
Homey, I did what I wanted  
Bought cars  
Bought bars  
Bought weight  
Bought it large  
Bought things that didn't matter and didn't get me very far  
And in the end, it seems, I wasn't very smart  
And didn't do things so very well  
'Cause the only thing I bought that was left  
Was some mo' time in a cell  
Life is a cell.



Think positive, be positive.  
I draw and write rhymes  
everyday. I plan to follow my  
dreams. A lot of these young  
guys, and older guys, follow  
your heart. I'm not gonna  
say do this or don't do that  
because that's all you hear  
all day. Just remember every  
action has a reaction. Stay  
true to your dreams and be  
real with yourself.

read the rest of William Nix's BWO piece on page 60

